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OR THE FUSILIERS

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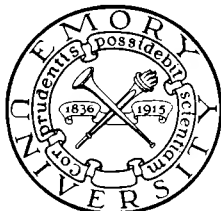
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OR,

The Fusiliers.

BY

JAMES GRANT, ESQ.

(Late 62nd Regiment),

AUTHOR OF "THE ROMANCE OF WAR," "THE AIDE-DE-CAMP,"
"SECOND TO NONE," ETC. ETC.

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1865.

PREFACE.

"IN regard to prefaces," says the author of "Curiosities of Literature,"—"ladies consider them so much space for a love story lost, though the Italians call them *la salsa del libro*,—the spice of the book."

Be this as it may, I must mention that many of the men whose names occur in these pages, bore the part ascribed to them during the operations of Sir Charles Grey's army in the Antilles.

A duel, nearly similar to that which is described as having taken place on board of the *Adder* frigate, actually occurred on the deck of one of H.M.'s ships-of-war when lying in a South-American port, in 1821.

The situation of the wreck in the Isle of Tortoises was suggested to me by the discovery of a mysterious vessel in a cavern of the island of Baccalieu, when I was at Fort Townsend in Newfoundland, where it excited much speculation.

As a few Mexican dollars were found on the rocks near, she was supposed to be Spanish; and such rumours were circulated of the vast treasure she contained, that H.M.S.

Comus was despatched from Halifax to investigate the matter ; but the hull contained a few dead bodies alone.

That the marvellous might not be wanting, there was told a story of a gigantic anchor being thrown by the sea on the desert shore near her. There it lay for a time, till a party came to remove it ; but it had vanished, like the treasure,—by no mortal agency, of course !

26, DANUBE STREET, EDINBURGH.

May, 1861.

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OLIVER ELLIS.



CHAPTER I.

BOYHOOD.

“WHEN is a man the arbiter of his own destiny? for he is like the leaf which is torn from a tree, and which the wind of heaven blows about.”

This fate has been my own, as peculiarly as it has been that of other military wanderers in life; for your soldier is a great traveller both by sea and land, an errant and a restless spirit; yet his travels and his restlessness are involuntary; for the moment he dons the red coat he ceases to be the master of “his own proper person,” or (like the leaf torn from the tree) to be the arbiter of his own destiny; but must march, sail, or fight wheresoever he may be ordered, *obedience* being the first word in his vocabulary. He becomes a machine in some sort, yet *not* a machine according to the degrading idea of his sapient majesty of Prussia; for the history of mankind will prove that the most brilliant achievements in war, and the most happy results in peace, like those efforts by which thrones have been won and nations freed, had their origin in the influence of the human heart, and in the mastery of the human passions, when hope, religion, or love of country, fired the soldier’s spirit! Who, then, will dare to say that the poor private soldier who mounts a deadly breach, or rushes on a

hedge of steel, risking mutilation, wounds, and death, without the hope of future fame if he falls, or the chance of sharing in the glory of the victory his valour wins if he survive,—is the mere automaton, the cold in blood and basely utilitarian would have him to be ?

Love of country, a noble sentiment, is ever strong in the heart of a true soldier. When the 67th, or South Hampshire regiment, commanded by Callender of Craigforth, landed at Portsmouth in 1772, after a long career of dangerous foreign service, with one accord and impulse the whole of the men threw themselves on the beach and kissed the pebbles.

The reader will pardon the professional vanity, or *esprit de corps*, which makes me thus prelude the plain unvarnished story of a soldier's career,—a description of some of the adventures I have passed through, the persons I have met, and the scenes I have witnessed on my march through life.

I was born in the camp of Burgoyne's army when it was on the borders of Lake Champlain : thus, the first sounds to which my infant ears became accustomed were the rattle of the drum, the notes of the Kentish bugle, the tread of marching feet, and the thoughtless hilarity of my father's comrades.

I remember myself first as a little boy, the pet and plaything of the soldiers, who made bats and balls, tops and toys for me ; who allowed me to ride on their backs, and to hold on by their queues, whenever I had a mind to do so ; who told me old stories of Wolfe's days, of the siege of Belleisle, and of wild adventures in West Florida. I remember of marches from town to town, from camp to barrack, and from fort to fort—all of which seem like dreams to me now ; while the troops trod on, through clouds of summer dust or the deep snows of an American winter, and I with other regimental imps, sat merrily and cosily perched

on the summit of a baggage-waggon, among trunks, arm-chests, knapsacks, pots, kettles, and soldiers' wives, who smoked, sung, and swore occasionally, and bantered the escort who marched on each side, with bayonets fixed. A thousand childish incidents of the soldiers' kindness to me when a boy (because they loved my father well), are lingering in my memory, while many a more important event of the days and years between that time and this, is forgotten for ever.

My father was a captain in a Scottish regiment, which formed a portion of Sir John Burgoyne's unfortunate army. He had received a severe wound at the storming of a stockaded fort near Skenesborough, and had to undergo the delicate operation of trepanning, which was skilfully done with a silver plate, whereon he had fancifully inscribed his name and the number of the regiment. He was afterwards slain in a skirmish on the banks of the Hudson, and was hastily buried on the field. The *last* time I saw him, was when my mother, with her eyes full of tears, held me up in her arms that the poor man might kiss me, as he was buckling on his sword, while the troops went hurriedly to the front. The livelong day the roar of the distant musketry rung in the pale woman's ears and in her soul, as the din of battle rose and fell upon the gusty wind. At sunset the troops came back defeated and dispirited ; but my father *not* among them. He was lying at the foot of a pine-tree, shot through the heart !

After this bereavement, my mother returned home with her two children (my sister Lotty and myself), and, renting a small cottage, about a mile from her native town, lived the quiet and secluded life that the scanty pension of a captain's widow allotted her.

I was two years older than dear little Lotty, who was a pretty black-eyed girl, with a fair skin, and great masses of dark-brown hair.

At our mother's side, as children, we prattled and talked of the regiment. It was the centre around which our thoughts revolved ; the feature upon which all our conversations and infant recollections hinged, though its ranks were filling fast with new faces, and the old had long since forgotten us ; yet it was always "the Regiment"—our once happy, movable home—that we spoke of, as of some good friend that loved us, and was far away ; and I loved the coarse red uniform, with its pewter buttons and white braid, for its wearers seemed a race of men apart from the cold and selfish society among which my mother's diminished means and widowhood had cast her. She, poor woman ! seemed to feel something of this, too ; for more than once, on beholding a wayfaring soldier passing through our quiet little village, I have seen her start, with her eyes full of tears, as her thoughts reverted to *him* who was sleeping far away in his lonely grave by the shore of the mighty Hudson. Like that old Scottish lady who is so beautifully portrayed in the "Lounger," "when she spoke of a soldier, it was in a style above her usual simplicity ; there was a sort of swell in her language which sometimes a tear (for her age had not lost the privilege of tears) made still more eloquent. She kept her sorrows, like the devotions that solaced them, sacred to herself ; they threw nothing of gloom over her deportment ; a gentle shade only, like the fleckered clouds of summer, that increase, not diminish, the benignity of the season."

The pretty village in which we resided lay at the bottom of a dell, which, in shape, resembled a great natural basin. Its sloping sides were clothed with luxuriant wood. Above the ancient trees, the old grey belfry of the village church—a church in which Knox had preached and the Covenant was signed—peeped forth from a mass of ivy that clambered to its weathercock. Through the dell brawled a rapid stream, which came foaming down from the mountains, and turned the great mossy wheel of an ancient mill, which, with

the blue-slatted manse, the quaint old kirk, and the ruined fragment of a haunted tower, wherein, as legends averred, a spectre wandered and treasure was buried, formed the four principal features in the valley.

The stream where the spotted trout lurked in the deeper holes, or shot to and fro in the sunbeams, was crossed by a little bridge, which, in my boyhood, I considered a great work of art, though, in after-years, I was astonished to find it so diminutive. The rush of the mill-race, as it poured in white foam over a wooden duct ; the voices of the children that played on the green before the village school ; the ceaseless clink of the hammer in the forge, which formed the rendezvous of all the male gossips ; the occasional note of a blackbird or a cushat dove from the coppice,—were the only sounds that were heard in our valley, save when the tolling of the church bell announced the Sunday, when the air was hushed and still, “and even the forest leaves seemed stirred with prayer.”

Though little more than a mile from a large and populous city, our hamlet was as secluded as if it had been twenty leagues distant. No thought had we then of railroads, electric wires, or Atlantic cables ; and even the stage-coach passed far from our wooded locality.

Our cottage was neat and small : it was situated on a slope of the dell which faced the south, and was buried among the woodbine, clematis, and sweetbrier, which covered all its rustic porch, grew around the windows, and clambered over the chimney-tops.

I can yet, in memory, see the little parlour in which we used to sit in the long nights of winter, by the cheerful fire, above which hung my father's sword and old gilt gorget, with two engravings of General Wolfe and the Marquis of Cornwallis in full uniform, with white breeches and kevenhuller hats ; and where we spent the calm evenings of summer, when the light lingered long in the blushing west.

and the perfume of the sweetbrier, the wild roses, the ripening fields, and of the fragrant earth, on which the dew was descending, were borne through the open windows ; while my mother—her grey hair smoothly banded under a spotless white cap, her black dress and meek sweet face making her look so like a picture, her work-basket and knitting apparatus at hand—read to Lotty and me, or spoke of scenes and adventures she had seen when far away from our present quiet locality, as she had an excellent memory for anecdotes and a refined literary taste. Thus she became our sole preceptress.

Save old Dr. Twaddel, the minister, and the village doctor, we had no neighbours, and consequently few visitors.

My mother spoke seldom of our father ; but we could see by the current of her thoughts that they rarely ran on aught else than his memory. Hopes she had none, save those that were centred on us.

So, for seven years, the blameless tenor of our even life rolled on.

My mother's quiet gentleness and soft ladylike manner, together with her kindness to the poor of the village, the sick and dying, among whom she shared her widow's mite—the mite that in heaven shall become a talent of price,—caused her to be tenderly loved by all ; and I repent me now, even after the long lapse of many stirring years, that in her latter days, the tears that rolled over her pale and fast-furrowing cheeks were caused by my errors, and it may be, my selfish and resentful pride.

CHAPTER II.

THE MINISTER.

TIME sped the faster that it sped unmarked; and now I had reached that most important and unpleasant period of a boy's life, when the necessity for increased action arrives; and a *period* it too generally proves to all the delusions, the dreams, and the charms of childhood—I mean the time when grave old gentlemen begin to question us categorically, and, as it often seems, somewhat intrusively, upon our future plans, and to impress upon us the necessity of “doing something for ourselves.”

My mother, who had frequently spoken with me on this subject, and seen with regret how my thoughts turned towards the army, of which she had now a terror, as being the too probable means of separating us for ever, resolved to consult Dr. Twaddel, the minister, on the subject; and in Scotland, “the minister” is always esteemed the second person in the parish; so to this consultation I consented, with some outward reluctance and considerable mental repugnance.

Our minister was a good kind of man in his own quiet way, though his excessive views of uprightness and propriety, together with certain severe lectures he had read me for making midnight raids into his orchard, for shooting one of his hens with a penny cannon on the King's birthday (the 4th of June), and for burning “Johnnie Wilkes” in effigy in the churchyard, had made him somewhat of a bugbear to me. He made indifferent sermons, but capital whisky negus, and could take a comfortable share thereof, though eschewing all hearty mirth or levity, and adopting in his deportment that somewhat too solemn gravity and cold, hard

external rigidity, with which the mass of the Scottish Lowlanders are tinged, and which makes their most sunny summer Sunday a day of gloom and silence. Like the majority of the northern clergy, he was a humble, meek, and well-meaning man, who, though he preached incessantly against the nothingness of this world and the good things thereof, had taken especial care to provide himself with a remarkably well-dowered helpmate. Without brilliance of talent, he possessed just heart enough to find favour with the poor of his flock ; and head enough to accomplish his Sunday task, by emitting a hazy sermon on some old scriptural text, which no one cared a jot about. Yet he was a good man withal, our old parish minister.

I remember, on one occasion, while he was commencing his sermon in the gloomy little village church, an old man propping himself on a staff entered the aisle, and being a stranger, he looked wearily and wistfully round for a seat. Being clad in rather dilapidated garments, and having a canvas wallet for alms, such as meal and broken bread, no attention was paid to him, either by the pew-openers or the congregation. The old man tottered along the aisle, and was about to seat himself humbly on the lower step of the pulpit stair, when the portly minister, with a glance of honest indignation on all around him, descended from the pulpit, and taking the aged mendicant by the hand, led him to his own pew, and placed him on a well-cushioned seat, beside his wife and family, to the no small discomfiture of the Misses Twaddel.

This silent rebuke was worth a thousand homilies ; it powerfully affected the whole congregation ; and from that moment, the minister, though usually cold and reserved, completely won the esteem of my mother. To consult him on my affairs, we repaired to the manse, which was a handsome and comfortable modern villa, separated from the village church by an orchard and the humble burying-ground,

in which "the rude forefathers of the hamlet slept." We were speedily ushered into his presence in a snugly-curtained, richly-carpeted, and fashionably-furnished room, which was so large, that our little cottage might have stood within it altogether. He received us rather kindly than politely, as he had a great esteem for my mother, though, since the advent of the felonious appropriation of a dozen of golden pippins and the slaughter of his best-laying hen, none whatever for me ; and while he reclined in an easy-chair and played with a large bunch of gold seals in one hand, or polished his bald head impatiently with the other, my mother, in a voice that was rendered tremulous by her maternal love and anxiety, briefly stated her wishes "concerning her boy Oliver."

After letting her relate her own story unaided, he rather sharply asked me what views I had for myself.

I glanced timidly at my mother ; for although now nearly sixteen, I felt like a child in her presence ; and at that moment, the influences of her faded cheek, her widow's cap, with its modest crimping, and her sweet sad face, were not lost upon me, though my proud spirit writhed under the humiliation of consulting even such a parish potentate as the minister, concerning me or my affairs.

"What views have you for yourself, sir?" reiterated the minister.

"I wish to be—to be——" I stammered and paused.

"What, sir—speak out!" continued the divine, authoritatively.

"Well, then, I wish to be a soldier."

"A soldier—whew!" he reiterated, with a tinge of surprise and contempt in his tone.

"Like my father before me."

"And leave your poor mother alone in her old age, you ungrateful loon! you should add that," he added, bending his stern grey eyes angrily upon me.

I shrunk at these words, and was silent, for they found an accusing echo in my heart.

"Could you endure his absence, Mrs. Ellis?"

"Alas!" said my poor mother, with her eyes full of tears, "adversity has taught me to endure all things patiently—a bitter art to cultivate; but such a separation would be the hardest of all."

"Then we must put him to some respectable business, where hard work and long hours will knock all silly notions out of his head. What kind of business would you like, young man?"

"I do not know, sir."

"Then who should know, sir? But no doubt you despise all manner of business."

I was silent, and my mother gave me an imploring glance to remain so.

"You are a boy—a mere bairn yet," resumed the minister, in that contemptuous manner often adopted by testy old gentlemen to their juniors; "but the trials of life will teach you the hollowness of those romantic fancies which are fostered by novels, playbooks, and such-like literary trash, of which, I doubt not, you have devoured over many already. You wish to be happy?"

"Of course, sir," said I, with a sigh of impatience; for all this sounded uncomfortably like a lecture, or a scrap of the doctor's sermons.

"Then you will find that it most truly consists in bestowing happiness on others."

I pondered over this remark, for I was too young to understand the application of it.

"Do you know the origin of happiness?" continued the minister.

I could have said, Plenty of money and fun—a fine house, a fine horse, and so forth; but I was silent, or merely said, "No."

"Then hark you, Master Oliver Ellis—the origin of happiness is contentment, and the resources of a mind humbled by the trials with which it pleaseth God to inflict us."

"So I have heard you preach a thousand times," thought I; and while I glanced around the magnificent drawing-room, on his well-cushioned easy-chair, his amplitude of paunch and successive folds of chin, the idea *did* occur to me, that the apostles were content with fewer of this world's goods; but I was silent again.

In short, the minister talked of morality and duty—of business habits, of close application, and strict honesty, and so forth, until I was heartily weary. I seemed to listen, but heard him not; for my thoughts were running far away on other things, and had soared into the region of sunshine and daydreams, until, after many trite common-places and innumerable pious nothings, he broke the spell by bluntly announcing that "the time was come when I *must* look about me. I was now sixteen; my mother was getting old; she could not last for ever, and if anything happened to her, what would become of *me*."

This cruel insinuation, so coldly uttered, cut me to the heart, and my mother's sad eyes involuntarily sought mine. She had often—too often in her sad and lonely hours—thought of the separation death might one day make between her penniless children and herself; but to hear it thus roughly alluded to, was too much for her, and the poor woman wept aloud.

The minister tried to console her by some hackneyed scriptural text: that man was made to mourn,—that he was sent into this world to be miserable, and had no business to be anything else; but this burst of emotion on her part stifled every secret aspiration and every strong wish in me, and I assented to any plan his reverence had to propose, resolving to leave to him the onerous office of opening up the path that was to lead me to fortune and to fame.

He promised "to speak anent me to his *doer*," a literal, and often fatally literal phrase, applied by the Scots to their lawyer or "man of business," without consulting whom, many of them will not even vote for an M.P., or do the most trivial thing. "I'll tak' a thought—I'll spier o' my *doer*," being the answer in the country to almost everything proposed.

Hence, in one week after our visit to the manse, I found myself in Edinburgh, and perched on the leathern summit of a high three-legged stool, in the office of Messrs. Harpy, Quirky, and Macfarisee, solicitors, eminent alike for their "sharp practice" and acute manner of handling all troublesome or cloudy cases of insolvency.



CHAPTER III.

MESSRS. HARPY, QUIRKY, AND MACFARISEE.

FROM the earliest period of which I can remember, I had fixed upon pursuing the career of a soldier. Notwithstanding the grim specimens I had seen of it, during my father's service in the States, I deemed it a life of glitter, change, and jollity—a chain of pleasures—a long and romantic panorama. I saw only scarlet and feathers, gold lace, the glitter of epaulettes and the flash of steel, with music and sunshine; and from amid this chaos came forth those airy castles and brilliant visions, which the mind of every imaginative and impulsive boy can fashion so readily—and too readily at times for his own peace; as such fragile creations are but ill calculated to stand the rough shock of awakening, or the stern realities of every-day life.

So it was with me. My new occupation, with its intolerable monotony, seemed a death-blow to all my hopes and romantic fancies ; while the manner and bearing of Messrs. Harpy, Quirky, and Macfarisee, were in no way calculated to reconcile me to my lot, or to enhance the value of the dog's pittance they doled out me, and a few other drudges of the quill. If, after a trial, I liked (ugh !) the law, I was to be indentured for five years, and to commence my legal studies at the college—to dive deep into “Stair's Institutes,” “Dirlton's Doubts,” and other light literature of a similar kind : money was to be raised to enable me pass muster ; but my growing repugnance to a civil life caused many delays in making the final arrangements.

It was my misfortune to have to do with three of the worst specimens of those legal and religious charlatans who bring discredit on a profession which, for three hundred years, has shed a brilliance over Scottish literature and Scottish society. If any such, now living, recognize themselves in my delineation, the resemblance is entirely fortuitous, and they had better not boast of it.

They had, I have said, a vast amount of “sharp practice,” and law proved a dear commodity to those who dealt with them.

The first partner was a wealthy idler, who gave himself insufferable airs, and affected to be “a man about town ;” but then he brought business to the firm, and gave it an air of respectability ; the second was a legal bully, miserly and underbred, longheaded and narrow-hearted ; for Mr. Quirky had been educated in one of the many charitable institutions with which the city abounds, and had come forth into the world a master in the science of subtlety, and without an emotion of sympathy for anything human or divine.

Macfarisee was one of the most amusing of rogues. With the vanity of the first and the subtlety of the second, he

covered his many failings by a bland aspect of meek sanctity, and that entire garb of accurate blackcloth which, with a long visage and a white necktie, go far to impose upon the simple in Scotland.

He was an elder, and reputed an upright pillar of the Church, and on each successive Sunday might be seen, with hands meekly folded, standing behind the brass platter wherein the offerings of the charitable were dropped. He never hid his holy candle under a bushel, but subscribed only to charities which published lists of the donors; he outwardly and vehemently eschewed strong waters, laughter, gaiety, the world, the flesh, and the devil; and yet, withal, had privately the reputation of being on the best possible terms with the latter.

He presided at all meetings for the conversion of Jews, Sepoys, and Ojibbeways; he inveighed against Sunday travelling, and the laxity of the present age; he harangued most feelingly on the benefit that must accrue from the moral, social, intellectual, and religious improvement of Caffres and Hottentots; while his unfortunate *employés* were reduced to the veriest of all white slavery, and, toiling fourteen hours out of the four-and-twenty, wrote their eyes blind and dim, during the dreary watches of many a winter night, long after all were hushed in sleep, and the nightly psalms and prayers, with which (in the way of business) he edified the neighbourhood, were ended. On one hand he patronized Bible Societies, and gave flannels to the poor; on the other, he had ungodly yearnings towards the possessions of the rich, whom he spoiled, to use his own phraseology, "even as the Egyptians were spoiled by the Jews of old;" for, as a conveyancer of other people's property into his own breeches pocket, Macfarisee had few equals in Scotland. He was one of a knot of small provincial notorities, who hovered about the Lord Advocate and the city M.P.'s, who got up public dinners and testi-

monials for their own "glorification," for the purpose of hearing themselves speak, and getting their otherwise very obscure names into the local journals.

Harpy, our first partner, was suave and gentlemanly in manner; thus, his chief occupation was to soothe, flatter, or, as he phrased it, "to talk over" those clients whom his compatriots had offended by insolence, or disgusted by hypocrisy, and who threatened to transfer their business and their papers elsewhere—*i. e.* to go out of the frying-pan into the fire.

Behold me, then, commencing life on the summit of a three-legged stool, in a dreary room, which overlooked a gloomy back-court, abandoned to weeds and a few broken bottles, and where nought living was seen, save an amatory cat or so prowling along the wall. I was intrenched among green boxes and bundles of musty, dusty papers, which had travelled to and fro for years, from the said dreary office to the various courts of law, increasing in bulk and volume on their travels, until each *process*—each fatal heir-loom—at last smothered its proprietor, the fool or knave, who, bitten by the *amor litigandi* of the modern Scots, and spurred on by a faithless and dishonest "man of business," or lost in a sea of duplicates and rejoinders—borrowing up of processes and paying down fees; fighting before Lords Ordinary and extraordinary—bewildered amid the difficulties, endless repetitions and absurd amplifications, doubts, delays, and expenses of the legal maelstrom into which Macfarisee had lured him, found the "record closed," when his last shilling had gone.

To me, the atmosphere in which I found myself was stifling. It was redolent of wax, red-tape, law-calf, and old parchment; and there was around me an incessant jargon about decrees and decisions, quirks, quibbles, statutes of limitation, judgments by default, writs of error and insolvency, acts of *cessio bonorum*, charges of caption and

horning, cases sent through outer and inner houses to avizandum and the devil ; and, save a hard-working gentlemanly lad, who died a Lord of Council and Session, and, than whom, no better ever sat upon the Scottish bench, my compeers were selfish, vulgar, and obnoxious to me, as their conversation consisted chiefly of pot-house wit, second-hand jokes, and empty nothings. Save alcohol, all spirit had long since died out of them, and at the voice of Macfarisee, they trembled as if under galvanism. Nothing but my repugnance for them, and daily irritation at the absurd assumption of Harpy and the hypocrisy of Macfarisee, prevented me from sinking into a state of mental atrophy, though exceedingly mercurial in temperament and itinerant in habit.

Hard work, however distasteful to a hero in embryo, I could have endured with patience ; but the bearing of the three parvenus whom I served, and who were cold, thankless, consequential as bashaws, and rude at times even to the verge of brutality, soured my temper and maddened my fiery spirit.

On the summit of that legal tripod, the three-legged stool already referred to, I passed the greater portion of the year 1791.

There are times now when I think I viewed the poor ephemeræ, whose drudge I deemed myself, through a false medium ; as I considered all who stood between me and the army as the natural enemies of mankind ; and, doubtless too often, when I should have been drawing a deed or engrossing an account, I was drawing a phantom sword, engrossed in the pages of a novel, or following the merry drums, the glittering accoutrements, and flaunting cockades of a recruiting party. In short, I believe the reader will already perceive that it was not in human power to make a lawyer out of such quicksilver material as Master Oliver Ellis.

It was towards the close of the year already named, that a change came over the monotonous tenor of my way ; and, like many other heroes who have flourished since the days of Mark Antony, I must needs fall in love. The way in which this event—so important in such a narrative as mine—came about was as follows.

One afternoon, when I was indulging in some of my usual day dreams, after reading the gazette which detailed the great treaty by which we prostrated the power of the valiant Tippo Saib, I was roused by the harsh and authoritative voice of Mr. Quirky, commanding me to accompany him and Macfarisee on business a few miles from town. To say *whither*, or what about, would have been too great a condescension in men of their vast consequence ; so I snatched my hat gladly (anything active was a change from the monotony of a desk at which I worked like a negro on monkey's allowance), and, after receiving into my custody a legal green bag, filled with papers, on a hackney-coach being called, we drove out of town.

The month was October, and the woods wore the sombre hues of autumn. The wild rose still bloomed in the wayside hedges ; the house-martin, the redwing, and the swallow, were still twittering about in search of the red berries, the haw, the hip, the sloe, and the elder, which now furnished a feast for them all. We whirled on amid copsewood and long lines of trees, that bordered or sheltered the bare fields, and exhibited on their dropping leaves all shades of russet, yellow, amber, dark-green, and red. The time was evening, and the dewy gossamer spread its silver web, laden with dew, from tree to tree ; and as those persons whom I accompanied never deigned to address me, but conversed together in whispers, I had nothing to draw my attention from the objects visible on each side of the way, through the hackney-coach glasses, after the dusk enabled me to lay aside a canting tract, which Macfarisee had solemnly put

into my hand when we started, and which, in politeness rather than hypocrisy, I had been pretending to peruse for some time.

At last we turned into an avenue of fine sycamores, through the waving branches of which the moonlight fell in flaky gleams, and under which were two lines of the flowering arbutus and monthly rose in full bloom. The hoofs and wheels scattered wide the rustling autumn leaves that lay thick in the old avenue, and we speedily drew up on the gravel that lay before the portico of a handsome mansion.



CHAPTER IV

APPLEWOOD.

As the carriage drew up, the front door of the house was opened by a servant in livery, and in the lighted hall beyond there appeared a young girl, who, by her stature, by her figure—which was light and graceful—and by the unconfined masses of her flowing dark-brown hair, could not have been more than seventeen—the age of all heroines in the good old-fashioned times.

Messrs. Quirky and Macfarisee sprang out and ascended the steps.

“I am so glad you have come at last,” said the young lady, in a tremulous voice of welcome. “My aunt has longed for you both so much, but more especially for *you*, Mr. Macfarisee ; she says that your prayers and pious conversation achieve for her a greater ease of mind and body than the ministrations of any clergyman or physician.”

“My dear Miss Amy, I fear you flatter my partner,”

snarled Mr. Quirky ; “ but we hastened from town (though hard pressed by a first-rate jury case) the moment we received your letter, stating that she wished to settle her worldly affairs.”

“ And how does the Lord deal with her ? ” asked Macfarisee, in his most bland and dulcet manner.

“ Severely, sir,” replied the young girl whom he named Amy, with her eyes full of tears ; “ you know she is always believing herself to be dying, but she *has* been in great suffering for three nights, and for these three nights and as many days I have never left her bedside.”

I now perceived that the girl’s dark-blue eyes were dimmed and bloodshot with tears and watching.

“ Miss Amy,” said Macfarisee, in the slow and impressive tone, which he used to all but his clerks, to whom he spoke sharply enough, “ I feel happy—a holy happiness—that illness has enlightened her mind, and that at last she has resolved to take my advice.”

“ Sir——”

“ I have so frequently recommended her to—to settle her worldly affairs ; but she weakly shunned all that reminded her of mortality, ever replying that sufficient for the day was the evil thereof ; but, alas ! my dear child,” he continued, in a sing-song voice, “ lo you now, death cometh like a thief in the night ; but I trust he finds the Lord’s faithful servant duly prepared for the great change that is at hand.”

“ Bravo, old six-and-eightpence ! ” thought I, as Quirky, whom his partner’s prosing wearied at times, snatched the green bag from me impatiently, saying,—

“ Here you, sir,—give me the documents. Miss Amy, your aunt’s state of health has long been precarious ; but what says the doctor of her ? ”

“ That—that——”

“ What ? ”

"She cannot last long now ; and she has been in misery, waiting for you."

"The deuce ! then we have no time to lose," said Macfarisee, with one of his keen office glances at Quirky, through a pair of eyes which were always "half-closed, like those of a night-bird in the daytime."

"My dear, dear aunt !" sobbed the poor young girl ; "follow me to her room, if you please, and this young gentleman——"

"Oh, he is only one of our young men, and may remain here quite well."

"Here, in this cold lobby ? Oh, that would never do ! Walk into this room, sir ; please to excuse us," said the girl politely ; and while my two employers, whom for their pride and hypocrisy I consigned to very warm quarters indeed, walked gingerly up stairs, I was left to my own reflections in a dark parlour.

In this sudden trip to the country there was something mysterious ; and as I gazed through the window upon the dark branches of the trees, tossing on the night-wind, and pictured to myself the old woman dying up stairs, strange and gloomy thoughts came over me ; but on a footman entering with candles, I asked him the name of the house.

"Applewood," said he.

"The house of Mrs. Rose ?"

"Yes."

Then a sudden light broke in upon me. I remembered that we had a wealthy client—an old widowed lady—whose failing health, credulity, and ample funds, had long rendered her a source of the deepest solicitude to Messrs. Quirky and Macfarisee, whose passive victim she had to every purpose and intent become ; for she believed devoutly in the worth, piety, and good works of our third partner. In his double capacity of elder of his kirk and legal adviser,

Macfarisee had long been one of those who hovered by the bedside of the dying, as vultures hover round a piece of carrion, and this wealthy old lady, Mrs. Rose, of Applewood, had long been marked by him as fair game to be run down at last.

It was by a studied system of cant, and by an external aspect of piety in its most fervid form, that Nathaniel Macfarisee usually recommended himself to those whom he deluded, and the number of legacies left to him by departed friends was really somewhat surprising, though many of them were averred to be for purposes of religion and philanthropy ; and when conversing with a bewildered client, whom

He darkened by elucidation,
And mystified by explanation.

it was amusing to hear him interlarding all his remarks with phrases and texts from scripture.

Amy Lee, the only living relation possessed by the old proprietress of Applewood, was the orphan daughter of a younger sister whom she never loved, for having married a young officer whose attentions had been long and provokingly divided between them. Amy had been sent from India to her care and kindness, penniless and otherwise friendless, for her father and mother, with many friends and relations, had perished in the dungeons of Tippoo Saib.

The grudge which the old lady bore her sister in youth, for depriving her of a first love, had taken some strange and fantastic form of aversion in maturer years ; and thus, though the poor and lonely Amy attended her sick bed, noting anxiously and sedulously all her querulous fancies, seeking to soothe her gusts of petulance, with the filial tenderness of a daughter and the patience of a little saint, she never could win the regard of, and barely earned a smile from, this strange old woman, whose days and ailments were now drawing to a close. Yet, the orphan girl loved this

kinswoman who loved not her, for she had traced something of her dead mother's features in her face—a mother for whom she still sorrowed,—and she found the best solace for that grief was to discharge the duties of affection, which fate had transferred from one sister to the other.

Mrs. Rose was the sole residuary legatee of her late husband, an old nabob, who had returned from India with a visage the colour of the gold he had acquired, and a heart that had narrowed and shrunk as his liver increased ; thus, her fortune was ample, and, as she was without children, she had long given her whole thoughts and attention to the welfare and success of the Rev. Mr. Pawkie's dissenting meeting-house, of which Macfarisee was an elder, and the porch of which edifice she had become fully assured was the only avenue to Heaven ; thus, the three had long gone hand-in-hand, in holding conventicles and meetings for the out-pouring of the spirit, amid tea, toast, and cold water—for humiliation, prayer, and the regeneration of all those wicked and benighted heathens, who did *not* occupy pews in the square-windowed, low-roofed, and barnlike edifice in which the Rev. Jedediah Pawkie expounded the pure gospel, inspired by the light that shone from the new Jerusalem, and consigned to very hot quarters indeed all who took their own way to Heaven instead of his.

Of this fustian spirit of religion and fanaticism, when combined with an aversion for the only living tie that existed between her and the world, the worthy Macfarisee—that inflexible Mede and upright pillar of the Kirk—hastened to take his usual advantage ; and in the sequel he proved himself to be a greater wolf in sheep's clothing than I could ever have imagined.

CHAPTER V

THE WILL.

WHILE seated in the parlour, into which I had been ushered, time passed slowly ; and the melancholy voice of Macfarisee, singing a psalm, came drearily and hollowly through the large corridors of the house, from the sick-room up stairs. He was giving ghostly comfort, together with his legal advice, to the departing sinner, whom I had been assured was now hovering between time and eternity, and who, at most, had not many days to live. Knowing his character, as I did, there seemed a horrible mockery in the words of the psalm :—

Lord, bow thine ear to my request,
 And hear me by-and-by ;
 With grievous pain and grief oppress,
 Full poor and weak am I.
 Preserve my soul, because my ways
 And doings holy be ;
 And save Thy servant, O my Lord !
 Who puts his trust in Thee.

As the quivering voice of Macfarisee emitted this verse, I could not repress a shudder of disgust and impatience, and tossed aside the religious tract he had given me ; for thus it is that such professors bring a ridicule on piety itself.

I had turned over all the books in the room without finding one to interest me, as they all belonged to the literature of cant ; but my eyes frequently reverted to the portrait of a young man in scarlet uniform, for it made me think of my father's regiment,—of honest men, and better things, and days long passed away. Then I thought of my mother and of dear little Lotty, and longed to be at home

with them, for the night-wind sighed mournfully through the old sycamores of Applewood, and my heart grew sad, I know not why. Red sheet-lightning occasionally illuminated the far horizon, and cast forward in black outline the stems of the trees and their tossing branches. Then there would be heard the opening and shutting of doors; the sound of steps hurriedly upon the well-carpetted stairs. These made me fear that the old lady was really dead; and solemn thoughts came over me, as I gazed down the dark avenue from the window. Then I burned with impatience to be gone, but had to wait, cypher-like, the time and pleasure of others whom I heartily despised.

After the lapse of nearly two hours, Messieurs Quirky and Macfarisee entered the room. The cunning eyes of the latter were half-closed; his grizzled hair was brushed stiffly up above each ear, till it resembled two horns; and his chin was buried in his loose white necktie. The two legal pundits were so absorbed in conversation as scarcely to notice me.

"She won't last a week, now," said Quirky, in a low voice.

"You think so?"

"I am certain of it. One can never mistake that sad and dreary expression of the face."

"Alas!" said Macfarisee, in his quavering tones, while upturning the whites of his cunning eyes, "all flesh is grass; but, Heaven be praised, the blessed truths of our Christian faith have been poured into her ears by my unworthy tongue to-night; and not in vain,—let us hope—not in vain!"

Quirky made a gesture of impatience; for the spirit of hypocrisy was so strong in Macfarisee that he was now getting into the habit of acting to *himself* as well as to others.

"It is fortunate that this will," said Quirky, unfolding a

slip of paper, "is dated so far back—fully sixty days ago ; so she may die when she chooses, now."

"She is at peace with the Lord—she hath satisfied *Him*."

"She has satisfied *you* too, I think ; and I doubt not you consider that a matter of much greater importance ; but, of course, you are aware that a holograph will, like this, does *not* convey lands and houses in Scotland ?"

"Eh ?—what ?—No. But it conveys furniture, plate, and pictures ; and it can be stamped and recorded on payment of a fee. But, alas, as I said, all flesh is grass."

"As a legal document, I fear it is valueless," said Quirky, who, at times, had a strange fancy for teasing his compatriot ; "letters of administration will never be granted on it."

"Damn it, Quirky, don't say so !" said Macfarisee, forgetting himself in his anger, "after all the trouble this old woman has given me ; confound her obstinacy, that declined a more legal form until it is now too late."

"There will assuredly be a row about it ; at least, unpleasant speculations."

"But I shall leave it in the custody of the niece, Amy Lee, and that will lessen all suspicion."

"A good idea—you are a lucky fellow."

"Hush," said Macfarisee, suddenly ; "that boy Ellis is there—the devil take him !"

"Where ?"

"At the table, reading—Shakspear, I have no doubt, though I have often told him that poetry is a device of the evil one. Mr. Ellis," he added in his blindest voice, handing me the folded document, "seal up this and address it to Miss Lee ; a desk is open there, and you will find materials."

"In what way shall I do it ?" I stammered, somewhat confused by having been forced to overhear a conversation so singular in character.

"Do it—do it—what d'ye mean?" asked Quirky with great crossness of manner.

"Young man," added our Nathaniel, "the scripture sayeth, 'whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it, with thy might.' Seal it up with Mrs. Rose's seal, which I see lying there on the desk, and address it to her niece."

After this they retired into the bay of a window, and conversed for fully ten minutes in low and earnest whispers. Curious to learn what a sheet of note-paper (for it was nothing more) could contain in the form of a will, while slowly and carefully making an envelope, I read the whole at a glance, and, so nearly as I can remember, it ran somewhat in this fashion.

"Applewood, 10th August, 1791.

"I leave to my niece Amy Lee twenty guineas to purchase anything she pleases, as a remembrance of me ; but I leave all my property and everything I possess, personal and heritable, Applewood, its house and lands, carriages, horses, cattle, pictures, books, and plate, as per catalogue, to Mr. Nathaniel Macfarisee, my approved friend and dear and worthy brother in the Lord, and him I appoint my sole executor and residuary legatee.

"PRUDENCE ROSE."

This strange and brief document, so terrible in its contents for the unfortunate niece, was written in the tremulous handwriting of the aunt ; and was witnessed by Quirky and Macfarisee, whose names were also appended thereto. However, all this was no business of mine ; my orders were imperative ; I folded, sealed, and addressed it to Miss Lee, who at that moment entered the room, and just as Macfarisee, with his peculiar cunning, wrote his initials *above the seal*.

"Thank Heaven, sir," said she to Macfarisee, "my poor aunt sleeps at last !"

"My humble ministration hath soothed her perturbed spirit," said he, taking the pale girl's delicate and white hand in his, and caressing it kindly; "but we must now depart, and into your custody we commit this sealed document. Keep it carefully until I ask for it again, and my dear, dear child, you are on no account whatever to break the seal or show it to any one, least of all to your worthy aunt, whose state of health will not permit her to survive much agitation. I know I can trust to your excellent discretion, child; for, as the scripture saith, 'Many daughters have done virtuously, but *thou* excellest them all!'"

He kissed her on the cheek, as he frequently did young girls of his congregation (our modern saint had a weakness that way), and then retired with his mincing step, with a groan on his lips for the nothingness of this life, and a smile in his stealthy eye at his own success. His partner followed with the same cat-like bearing.

For a moment, boy as I was, I stood bewildered by the astounding game Macfarisee was playing; and with a glance of commiseration at the handsome young girl, who, all-unconscious of the evil intended for her, with trembling white hands was securing the sealed document in her desk, while her charming face was hidden by her dark ringlets as she bent forward. Then I hastened after my august employers, who had now reached the door of the house. Here they paused, and Mr. Quirky patted me on the back, saying,—

"You are a sharp and intelligent lad, Oliver."

"Yes; a most discreet, quiet lad, and not a talker," added the junior partner. "We like you very much, Oliver."

As they never praised me before (in fact, I was a very idle dog), I bowed with a perplexed air, and asked myself what the deuce was in the wind now?

"We have a little piece of business for you to do," said

Macfarisee, "and you must remain here for a few days to perform it."

"*Here ?*" I reiterated.

"Here, my dear sir."

"But—but, sir, for what purpose ?"

"Not so fast, young man," said Quirky, in his usual grating tones. "You will remain here until you have copied the catalogues of movable effects, which shall be shown to you by the housekeeper and steward ; the more complete these lists are made, the longer time you will have here to enjoy yourself. They are required," he added in a whisper, "with reference to the last testament of Mrs. Rose. As soon as the copies are made, get them signed by Miss Lee, the steward, and housekeeper, and return to town. You understand me, sir."

"The fact is, my dear young man, Mrs. Rose is not very strong in health or intellect just now, and we are afraid she may add some stupid codicil to her will, especially if her husband's brother, Colonel Rose, returns from India. You will be left here ostensibly to prepare these lists of her movable property ; but the moment *he* arrives (and he is expected shortly), start for town, and let me know."

"And so I am to be left here ?" I asked ponderingly.

"Yes."

"How long ?"

"A week—it may be a fortnight—you understand."

I did not understand ; but I afterwards divined that I was to be our Nathaniel's spy upon the old lady and her household.

"My mother at home will believe I am lost."

"Oh, without fail I shall make the good lady aware that I have detained you on special business."

All this thoughtfulness and unwonted politeness sorely puzzled me for a time.

"You will find plenty of amusement here—a fine house

and fine grounds—books and pictures in plenty. It will be quite a vacation for you.”

“They are fortunate who possess such,” said I with a sigh, as I thought of my mother’s little cottage.

“Young man, be not guilty of envy or covetousness, but work hard and pray that God may keep you poor rather than rich ; for wealth leadeth to pleasures and employments which are abominations and vanities in the sight of Heaven ; so work, I say, for man was born to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow ; and so good night. Do not forget your prayers at bed-time, and to attend church on Sunday while you are here.”

Macfarisee bowed and smiled through the window as the hackney-coach was driven off ; and I knew well that when *he* smiled, it was with mockery in his heart and mischief in his soul.

In a minute more, the sounds of the wheels had died away under the trees of the gravelled avenue ; and with a feeling of loneliness, and something of dread, lest those two men were preparing a snare for me, bewildered by all that was passing through my mind, I returned to the parlour which I had just left.



CHAPTER VI.

AMY LEE.

IN my career there have been some days and incidents to which I shall ever look back with pleasure and delight, and among these I number my brief sojourn at Applewood.

Amy Lee received me with a blush of pleasure on her

pale and somewhat saddened young face, for the atmosphere of the sick-room and the dull life she led had impressed her features with premature thought ; and when seated with her at supper in the long dining-room of Applewood, with the wigged and breastplated portraits of past generations staring down upon us from the walls, with plate and crystal glittering on the table, amid the wax-lights of the chandelier and girandoles, and with two servants in showy livery attending us, I felt all the sudden novelty of the situation with an emotion of delight at the beauty of the young girl.

The loss of her parents, travel, the scenes she had seen in India, and the life she had since led with her aunt, made Amy older than her years, and thoughtful in her youth. Motherless and fatherless almost from infancy, Amy had been, like myself, early accustomed to rely upon her own reflections and resources. Her father was an officer who had served long and faithfully in Indian wars ; thus we had much that was in common between us, and in five minutes were as intimate as old friends.

The musical inflections of her voice had in them a chord which proved singularly seductive. The smile in her dark-blue eyes was full of drollery and sadness by turns—of witchery always—and the extreme blackness of their lashes, when contrasted with the whiteness of their nervous lids, lent a darker tint to them at all times,—a deeper colour than they really possessed.

Boylife, I felt a fond and sudden interest in this attractive girl ; but to tell the secret I possessed—to reveal what hung over her, the wrong her nearest relative meditated,—would be to betray and impeach the supposed-to-be irreproachable Macfarisee ; thus I was troubled, restless, and wretched, amid the charms of her presence and of her society ; and while she poured out wine for me, with little hands that trembled when they grasped the heavy crystal decanters,

and selected the best fruit in the salvers for my plate, acting the hostess with a grace peculiarly her own, when she chatted and smiled to me, I relapsed frequently into silence and thought.

"And the task for which you have been left here is to prepare some inventories for my aunt?" she observed, after one of those awkward pauses which at times ensue in the conversation of strangers.

"It would seem so."

"Alas! she will never be able to examine them."

"Oh," said I bitterly, "Mr. Nathaniel Macfarisee is sufficiently interested in the documents to relieve the poor lady of all trouble in that matter."

"He is so very good and kind. Dear Mr. Macfarisee!"

"I am glad you think so."

"You will have a frightful deal of trouble, Mr. Ellis. Why did not Mr. Macfarisee remain himself, or leave some one else to assist you?"

"I know not," was my reply, though I knew very well; for my discretion and silence were more readily to be relied on than those of others in the employment of the worthy triumvirate.

"And you will be here——"

"A week, Mr. Quirky said; perhaps a fortnight."

"A whole week! I am so glad of that; you will be quite a companion for me," she exclaimed, clapping her hands with girlish pleasure, while I reflected that to spend a week in this house, with such a girl, was assuredly the most delightful piece of office-work that had occurred to me since I became the legal pupil of Messrs. Harpy, Quirky, and Macfarisee.

"Your aunt, Mrs. Rose, has long been ill, I believe."

"Oh, for years, and has endured such pain in all parts of her body, that I am astonished her soul has not been put to flight—poor woman!—long since."

"But I have read somewhere that the soul is not in the body, but in the brain—I think Locke says so," said I, becoming learned as the wine inflamed me, and the decanters on the table seemed alternately to multiply and decrease in number.

"I never read Locke," replied Miss Lee, laughing; "but I feel assured that it is in the heart."

"I have no doubt every young beauty supposes so; but if we think long—and thought is the action of the soul—it becomes weary, for the *head* aches."

"But if we suffer long anxiety, or are in love, does not the heart ache?"

"I do not know—I never was in love. Were *you*?"

"No; how can you ask me such a question?"

We both blushed furiously now, as a boy and girl might do, and cast down our eyes; then as our hands came in contact, how I knew not, unless it was that Amy searched for the nut-crackers and I hastened to assist her, we both trembled, and were seriously overcome by confusion.

At that moment a clock struck in the hall.

"Heavens," exclaimed Miss Lee, "it is twelve o'clock; we have been conversing, and never reflecting that we cannot stop time."

"But you have made me forget its flight," said I, in a low voice.

This was a gallant speech for a lad of seventeen, and as such, I have thought fit to record it here.

Another little pause ensued, and fortunately her aunt's bell rang sharply, so she begged to be excused and hurriedly left me. For some time I waited her return; but she came no more that night, or morning rather, and I retired to bed, my heart filled with new impulses, and my head with new visions and fancies. When closing my eyes on the pillow, I seemed still to see before me the long lashes, the delicate hands, and thick dark curls of Amy Lee,

while her sweet merry tones lingered in my ear. I was restless, and the dawn almost came ere I slept, with the full intention of setting about Macfarisee's obnoxious business in the morning.

With the new day I was more bewildered than ever ; for nearly the whole of it was spent in sketching certain picturesque sycamores of the avenue in the young lady's album, and writing love verses on the embossed " Bristols" and pink and peagreen leaves thereof ; or in rambling about the lawn, feeding the peacocks, visiting the preserves of gold and silver pheasants (long undisturbed by the echo of a gunshot), and studying the language of flowers in the conservatory ; so if inventories of plate and pictures were requisite to complete the earthly happiness of Mr. Nathaniel Macfarisee, he was exceedingly unlikely to get them from me.

Amy's consolation and companions in the lonely life she led had long been her birds, her flowers, her music, and her own thoughts, when not occupied by attendance upon her ailing, besotted, and ascetic relative, whose sentiment of revenge, cherished against her mother, combined with the warp which the evil influence of Macfarisee's subtle mind and oily tongue had given an intellect already unhinged by time, disease, and the homilies of the Reverend Mr. Pawkie, had led her ultimately to pen the absurd and wicked testament already referred to, and to do the poor girl a deadly wrong, by robbing her of all that was hers by right of inheritance, by law, and justice, for the enrichment of a stranger.

CHAPTER VII.

TWO YOUNG HEARTS.

THROWN together as we were in that great and lonely house, meeting so often at meals and elsewhere, it was impossible for us to escape being mutually attracted ; “for in youth,” as some one says, “it seems so natural to love and be beloved, that we scarcely know how to value the first devotion of the entire and trusting heart ;” and so it proved with one of us.

The secluded neighbourhood of Applewood,—the state of her aunt’s health, together with that lady’s eccentric and severe habits and strange views of life and of the world, caused her society to be little courted ; thus, Amy saw few other visitors than Macfarisee, and other pious sinners, who occupied high places in the synagogue presided over by the Reverend Mr. Pawkie, and none of whom were famous for hiding their candles “under a bushel,” preferring to set them on the very summit thereof ; consequently, my sojourn at Applewood, whatever the purpose that sent me there, was rather an event in the lonely life of the young girl.

Since those days, I have told others—many others—whose names may never appear in this chequered narrative, that I *loved* them, and each avowal came more easy from my lips than the last ; but it seemed to me as if the link was not so tender, the faith was not so deep, or the love so true, as those I bore for bonnie Amy Lee.

When she could steal from her aunt’s room, we were always together, for Amy knitted bead-purses, made up significant bouquets from the conservatory, read novels, and when we interchanged *underlined* passages from the poets. showed she had talents for flirtation equal to most young

ladies. A week slipped away without any tidings arriving from my employers, and without the arrival of Colonel Rose from India, to raise the siege which has been so long and so successfully laid to his sister-in-law, to whom his deceased brother had so foolishly given the entire control of all he had acquired in the Carnatic, where, at the head of his sepoys, he had bombarded the nabob and looted the dingy natives to some purpose and to some profit.

The life I led was entirely new to me. I was daily associating with this charming young girl, at an age when first the female form begins to awaken new and undefined ideas of delight in the mind of a half-grown youth, and it was impossible for me not to feel all its influences.

In the early morning, when the sun rose above the hills, half veiled in clouds of purple and of gold, and when the battlemented castle, the old grey mansions, and churches of the distant city, seemed to float amid the silver mist that rose from the dewy hollows, we rambled together in the walks of the garden, or on the smooth green velvet lawn, when the first buoyant breeze came over the upland slope, and when the first beam of the tremulous sunshine lit up the dewy leaves ; when the birds twitted from branch to branch, shaking off the dew-like diamond drops, and we felt our breasts expand, and our young hearts grow glad and joyous, we knew not why, though poor Amy Lee was often pale with the long vigils she spent by the sick-bed of her aunt. The active mind and real goodness of heart possessed by Amy lent a living light to her eyes and to her features, filling them with a beauty beyond what they might otherwise have possessed.

We were daily together in the sunny little breakfast-parlour, which opened into the brightly-flowered shelves of the conservatory ; and then Amy, clad in the most becoming of frilled morning dresses, with her little white hands poured out my coffee, &c., and charmingly did the

honours of our little table—and then, thereafter in wandering and in dreams, would pass the day, until evening, when—thank heaven!—the old dame upstairs was cosily tucked in for the night; and then we rambled through the long avenues and evergreen shrubberies, while the brilliant moon shed her silver rays athwart the tall lines of aged sycamores, around which the tendrils of the dark ivy clung; and when the diamond stars shone above in the purest of ether, and we dreamed on, and talked of a thousand things, or often were silent, for at times silence is more eloquent than words, while only the breeze stirred the foliage overhead, and all else was hushed save the beating of our hearts—amid circumstances so conducive to the growth of boyish love and to philandering, who the deuce could resist the passion? Certainly not a day-dreamer like Oliver Ellis.

A second week had nearly elapsed when I received a letter from Macfarisee, announcing, in his curt fashion, that the sooner I returned to town the better, with the papers he had left me to prepare—and to tell Miss Lee that Colonel Rose had arrived in London.

The papers! Until then I had forgotten all about them; and then there was the colonel—for reasons of my own, I felt quite as anxious about him as the worthy conveyancer Macfarisee could have done.

“And what is the colonel, Amy?” I asked, as we sat in a seat of the conservatory, with my arm round her waist, her cheek resting on my shoulder, and her thick curls half enveloping my face.

“An officer of Indian cavalry. I know nothing more.”

“Coming home with a fortune—gout in his legs, and cotton in his ears; a blue coat with brass buttons—a yellow face and a bamboo cane.”

“Why so?”

“All colonels who come from India appear so.”

"Nay," said she, looking up with her droll eyes, "he is a handsome young dragoon."

"Young!"

"His portrait is in the parlour."

"Ah, I remember; but it must have been taken long ago."

"He was nearly twenty years younger than his brother, my uncle; and it has been arranged by my aunt and Mr. Macfarisee, that he takes me out to India with him when he returns."

"Wherefore to India, Amy?" I asked in a quavering voice, as my bubble seemed on the point of dissolving.

"Because they say I am alone here."

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"Did they not add, that all European girls—especially pretty ones—make good marriages there?"

"Well," said Amy laughing, "I confess they did."

"I would kill your husband if I saw him!" said I, while a gesture of sadness and impatience escaped me.

"There—there now, don't be cross, dear Oliver, and I will say nothing to offend you again," said the playful girl, placing her soft little hands on each of my cheeks, and pressing her cherry lips to mine. "Don't speak so, pray."

"And this dreary task I have to do—to copy those lists of plate, pictures, and rubbish,—I shall never get on with them!" I exclaimed with impatience, as a loathing for business returned to me.

"Not unless you begin—but I shall be so glad to help you."

"Thanks, dearest Amy."

"Here are the steward's and house-keeper's books, which contain all the information you require, and there is my desk in the parlour—it is open; to work, then, at once, and in a few minutes I will rejoin you."

"So deluded and unsuspecting!" thought I, while seating myself at her desk, as she lightly hastened to attend her querulous patient, and I dipped my pen in the ink-stand, and dreamily turned over a sheet or two of paper, and saw before me—what?—the identical will which I supposed to have been committed to Amy's custody, and which assigned Applewood and all it contained to Macfarisee and the heirs of his body, and which Amy had never seen, as since that night she had never opened her desk.

Until then, in the delightful dream of the passed days, I had almost forgotten the will and all about it; and now, it would seem, that in my haste and confusion on the night I first came to Applewood, I had folded, sealed up, and addressed a sheet of *blank* note paper, the exact size of the holograph will, while leaving that document open, among the writing materials in Miss Lee's desk. Here was a fortunate mistake.

For a moment I was bewildered by this startling discovery. My first impulse was to open the old envelope, and reseal it, as originally directed by the orders of Macfarisee, but I must have torn the envelope through his *initials*; my second impulse was to read over once again the contents of the will; then, as the whole web of hypocrisy and wrong unfolded itself more vividly before me, and the sweet face of Amy, on one hand, was contrasted with the odious idea of Macfarisee on the other, I twisted up the paper, to procure which he had spent years of prayer and hypocrisy, fawning and twaddle. I then tossed it into the fire, and in a moment it was consumed!

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM POETRY TO PROSE AGAIN.

AFTER two weeks of joy and pleasure, I found myself again in the establishment of those limbs of the law, Messrs. Harpy, Quirky, and Macfarisee, and chained, as it were, to my inkspotted desk, like the son of Clymene to his rock ; overlooking the miserable back-court, where the two old and half-dead Dutch poplars, surrounded by smoke-blackened walls of stone, vegetated feebly among the soot that covered their leaves, and the dust that was washed down from the eaves of adjacent houses. Then, when looking on their sickly verdure, and the lonely sparrow, evidently a misanthrope, that hopped from branch to branch, I thought of the green shady avenue of sycamores, and sighed for the grassy slopes, the brilliant flower-garden, the thick copses, and the blue-eyed fairy of Applewood.

If application to work had been repugnant to me before, it was insupportable now. I had ever in my ears the voice of Amy Lee, and before me all her pretty ways, her thick black tresses and her soft bright eyes. My hours of reverie were hours of happiness ; for then I shut out the external world to commune with my own thoughts, and this beautiful girl was the planet around which they all revolved,—the guiding star to which I turned.

Poor though I was, and all but friendless,—timid as a boy and a lover, I did not shrink from raising my eyes to Amy Lee, whose hand might have been sought by the wealthiest proprietors in the county ; but after I returned to town, our meetings were casual, and seemed far, so very far, between. And so I dreamed on, even my old aspira-

tions after the rattle of the drum and the smoke of gunpowder being, for the time, almost forgotten.

I knew the church which her aunt's household attended ; it was a branch of Mr. Jedediah Pawkie's establishment, and was nearly ten miles distant from ours ; yet I often walked there on Sunday, that I might see Amy,—might be under the same roof with her, and when she bowed to me, as we left the church porch together, her smile, so full of brightness, welcome, and meaning, sent me home happy,—happy over the hills, amid gusts of wind and winter snow. Her weekly smile rewarded me for hours of toil, of dull drudgery, and nameless, hopeless longings.

I had never thought of Amy as my wife. Boy-like, all I knew, and felt, or cared for, was, that I loved this girl and desired to be loved in return. My wife ! At seventeen, the idea would have frightened me. I, so poor,—I, who had the great battle of life to fight—to combat manfully for bread, and who saw no certain future, not even that vague but bright horizon which the eye of every imaginative boy sees ; a horizon that too often recedes, grows fainter, and disappears as years roll on, like the waves of ocean, with their many hues, their sorrows and their changes.

Love for my mother on one hand, and this new love for Amy on the other, now combined to inspire me. I toiled and struggled on at my desk and at my studies, hoping for some change, as the young and ardent ever hope, against fate itself ; but alas for the poor human heart, when honest pride, honour, and laudable ambition have to contend with stern adversity, wealthy snobbery, or successful hypocrisy !

The servitude which was exacted from me, and the absurd hauteur with which I was treated, were fast increasing my abhorrence of an occupation which had nothing to relieve its monotony. I was glad when the dreary hours of business were over, and I was permitted to snatch my hat and rush home. There to Lotty I would pour out all

the bitterness of my discontent, and whisper of my secret longings after scenes more stirring and congenial, for the conviction was daily growing stronger in my heart, that

One crowded hour of glorious life
Was worth an age without a name !

But my mother soothed and calmed, if she failed to alter my views. Ever ready to console and advise with gentleness, she led my soul from angry bitterness and useless repining to purer hopes and holier wishes ; and the knowledge that she loved me so dearly, and that her kind heart was full of maternal affection, anxiety, and hope for us, would make me resolve to bear all for her sake, till next day perhaps, when some new act of insolence or oppression on the part of my underbred taskmasters would again rouse all my slumbering fury.

Amid all this, my day-dreams would come again and again ; my visions of being a soldier, or anything else but what I was then.

Now I was ploughing the deep green ocean, the white sails of an imaginary ship swelling out in the pure sea-breeze, the waves rolling around me in foam and sunshine—ploughing it to lands that were covered with waving foliage, with brilliant verdure and glowing fruit—to sunny isles that lay I knew not where—but

Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been.

Certainly the island of Robinson Crusoe stood most vividly out among them, with Amy Lee, however, as a substitute for his dingy comrade Friday. Now I was an actor—a successful one, of course—amid the glare of tinsel and the footlights, bringing down thunders of applause from the gods and wreaths of laurel from the boxes. Now I was a shepherd, as we find him pourtrayed by Watteau or

described in the pastorals of Virgil, cased in hairy buskins, enjoying his *otium* under a spreading oak, crowned with dark-green ivy, playing to his flocks on an oaten reed and enjoying curds and cream with Corydon and Thyrsis. Occasionally I thought that being a captain of Sicilian or Italian banditti, in easy circumstances, inhabiting a picturesque cavern, in front of which girls were always dancing with tambourines and tabors, while I wore a handsome dress with bell-buttons, bandaged legs, and a steeple-crowned hat, disporting long flowing ribbons—or that figuring as a buccaneer, with a cocked hat and brace of pistols (like Paul Jones in the popular prints), might not be an unpleasant mode of life ; but amid all these vagaries, the old stereotyped idea of being a soldier ever came vividly forth, as the most favourite of my boyish dreams. *Then* I was in uniform—a sword in my hand and the sharp blast of the trumpet in my ear. I was on the march to imaginary fields of fame and honour. Thus a thousand bright shadows were ever floating before me, and my reading fed this fancy, folly if you will, rendering me careless of work, and embroiling me yet further with those who entrusted it to me.

The bronzed but kind and jovial faces of my father's men—the men of “the regiment” far away—men who had nursed me, toiled with me, and borne me on their backs in sportive merriment, were never forgotten. My heart swelled with the memory, and the sight of a red-coat ever brought them all before me ; for, as dear old Corporal Trim said of the son of Le Fevre, the poor dying lieutenant, “I had been bred up from an infant in the army, and the name of a *soldier* sounded in my ears like the name of a *friend*.”

CHAPTER IX.

SEQUEL TO THE STORY OF THE WILL.

ONE morning it had come to the ears of Mr. Nathaniel Macfarisee that I had been discovered in the pit of the Theatre Royal, seeing Stephen Kemble and the Queen Katherine of Mrs. Siddons—that, in addition to being in this place of sin, which Mr. Pawkie weekly denounced as the avenue to a very hot climate indeed, I had applauded, by clapping my hands in an unseemly manner, and in the exuberance of my agitation or excitement during the dying scene, had snatched off the well-powdered wig of an old gentleman who sat before me, “a most grave and reverend signior,” Mr. Macrocodile, the City Chamberlain, and tossed it up to the great lustre, amid the crystal labyrinths of which it remained: all of which enormities drew upon me a most severe lecture, interlarded with many texts of scripture, from our upright and good Nathaniel, who professed the greatest horror of playhouses, and valued a Siddons or a Kemble no more than the painted mountebank who plays with bowls and balls, or the Chinese who swallows a barrow-full of paper shavings, and emits thereafter a hundred yards of fine satin ribbon.

In the midst of his dreary and impertinent harangue, to which I listened with fortitude, if not with Christian resignation, Mr. Quirky approached with a black-edged letter in his hand, and with a curious smirking expression in his eye. It was from Amy Lee, to announce that her aunt was dead, and “begging that dear, good, kind soul, Mr. Macfarisee” to come down to Applewood—that she was to be buried in three days, and, fortunately, that Colonel Rose had arrived.”

Smiles of mutual intelligence and satisfaction were ex-

changed by the friendly partners, and Quirky, after a whisper, warmly and in a congratulatory manner, shook the hand of the "dear, good, kind Macfarisee," who had just returned from a meeting of Elders in Mr. Pawkie's vestry, where Mr. Macrocodile had read a paper on the moral obliquity of the Zulu Caffres, a subject "anent" which the said congregation had long been in sore affliction.

"Well, well," said he, getting up a profound sigh, "had I known that she was in such sore extremity four days ago, we might have had her prayed for in the kirk ; but, verily, she has gone from this vale of tears to the place of her just reward, and a friend so dear to me, I would not wish back on earth again."

Quirky scrutinised the face of his friend, to see if there was any irony concealed under this remark ; but from Macfarisee's visage nothing could be gathered. It was deep as the crater of Etna. However, that day he and Quirky started at full speed for Applewood, where, as I afterwards heard, they treated poor Amy with very little ceremony and less commiseration, but carefully sealed up every drawer, press, and lockfast place.

On the funeral day, Macfarisee appeared accoutred with those white trimmings on the cuffs of his coat, named in Scotland "weepers ;" but his were of the largest size, being nearly three inches broad. An enormous bow of crape decorated his hat, and streamed down his back in testimony of his unparalleled affliction. His face wore an unusually lugubrious expression, for this gentleman was a profound actor ; and with great solemnity of manner he gave me a green bag, containing several docketts of papers, the catalogues of worldly effects, as I shrewdly suspected ; and calling for a hackney, we drove off, accompanied by Mr. Quirky, also attired in sable garb of woe, but not of such unutterable depth as his deeper companion.

The season was winter now, the severe winter of 1791.

The woods were bare and leafless, and the white glistening snow covered all the upland slopes and distant hills. The wayside runnels were congealed, and hard as flint. The breath of the hackney horses curled like smoke from their nostrils, while their hoofs clinked and rung on the frozen roadway; the icicles hung like long pendants from the eaves of the cottages, and from their chimneys the smoke ascended in straight columns to a vast height through the rarified atmosphere. The poor robins chirped drearily on the bare twigs, and everything bore evidence of a keen cold Scottish winter, as we whirled along; but now my heart beat light and merrily. In an hour or less I might see Amy, and be under the same roof with her—the bright-eyed, black-haired Amy; and now I began to perceive the full value of the service I had done her.

At last we wheeled into the well-known avenue of old sycamores.

“Hah, we are just in time,” said Macfarisee, consulting his huge gold repeater, as we drew up at the pillared portico, before which stood a hearse surmounted by those hideous and fantastic sable plumes, which cast a mockery on real grief; and along the avenue stood a train of hackney coaches covered with crape, for such was then the fashion.

“Ay, sir, you are just in time,” said an old servant in livery, opening the coach door; “the minister is gaun’ to pray before the liften’ o’ the kist.”

I surveyed the fellow, to see if there was any regret expressed in his hard-lined visage, but not a vestige could be traced in them or in his tone, though he was one of Mr. Pawkie’s most exemplary flock.

Above the portico hung an escutcheon, of the fashion peculiar to Scotland, France, and Germany—lozenge-form, and six feet square, of black cloth—containing the complete achievements of the deceased, with the sixteen coats of the families from whom she derived her gentility; for, though

Macfarisee and the late Mrs. Prudence Rose affected to despise heraldry as worldly folly and empty vanity, Colonel Rose, of the M. N. Cavalry, and late Ambassador to His Highness the Nabob of Chutneybogglywallah, thought very differently; and hence this huge affair, powdered with almost the only tears seen on the occasion (save in Amy's eyes), met us face to face as we entered the mansion of Applewood.

I will hasten over these matter-of-fact details of my earlier life, as I am anxious to come to events of a more stirring and congenial nature; but, somehow, I have got into this story of a "will," and must finish it.

The whole of the servants and other dependents were in deep mourning, and assembled with other persons in the large dining-room of Applewood; most of them wore the serious and thoughtful expression of face usually seen at a Scottish funeral; but others had grave visages, specially got up (like their starched neckcloths and muslin weepers) for the occasion. There was a solemn importance over all, while wine was poured out, and cakes were served on silver salvers by the servants and undertakers' men. The blinds were all drawn down, and, in the old fashion, the furniture and mirrors were carefully shrouded by white coverings.

The air without was clear, ambient, and full of frost and sunshine; the trees were glittering and the clouds sailing in the clear blue sky. Everything seemed sparkling and instinct with life. No one would have imagined that Death was within arm's length of us, but for the lugubrious countenances and sombre garb of those around.

Colonel Rose, a tall and soldier-like man, clad in a fashionably-made suit of mourning, and bearing a well-bred but somewhat indifferent air, stood with his back to the fire, and his legs planted on the hearth-rug, a custom usually acquired in barracks and orderly-rooms. He was conversing

with ease, but in an undertone, to Macfarisee, who turned up the white of his cunning eyes, and groaned from time to time, while expatiating on the transcendant merits of the deceased ; till the colonel, who had never seen his sister-in-law before, and was tolerably indifferent on the subject of her religion and piety, the pure form of which had never reached to Chutneybogglywallah, seemed bored, and he fairly walked away, when the Rev. Jedediah Pawkie approached to open fire in the same manner.

“So at last the poor old lady is no more,” said the pastor, adjusting his weepers over his black gloves and lengthening his already elongated visage.

“Yes, at last,” snuffled Macfarisee. “Oh Lord,” he added, profanely quoting the psalmist (for in *him* it was profanity), “how manifold are thy works” (here he took a glass of wine), “in wisdom hast thou made them all !”

To what this outburst was specially applicable, none could perceive—nor did it matter. He covered his face with his cambric handkerchief, and affected to become absorbed in prayer ; then, above the low hum of conversation that rose from those assembled, no sound could be heard but the sobs of poor Amy, who was attired in black silk, with deep flounces of crape. I could not resist drawing near, and twice stole her hand into mine ; but so full was she of her own thoughts, that she made no response at that time.

“Weep, child—weep !” said Macfarisee, sidling over to her (with his creaking shoes, which suggested comfort at every step), and patting her beautiful head ; “it is good for you—grief is a natural portion of our transitory and miserable life here below. Ah—ah !” he added, shaking his head, and imbibing another glass of the full-bodied old port, “what a world it is—what a world !”

A long prayer, dull as ditchwater, was now emitted by the Rev. Jedediah Pawkie, who was formerly minister of Skittle Kirk, but had dissented on some new form of Church

government. During the emission of the "soul-feeding discourse," as it was termed, Mr. Macrocodile (who, remembering the episode of the wig, frequently frowned at me) groaned several times heavily ; and Mr. Macfarisee shed many tears, and, to all appearance, was deeply moved. I must own that this exhibition confounded me. To see a rogue smile when dissembling is nothing new ; but to see one shedding tears, during the same process, was rather a novelty. He was then acting to himself, as well as for others. After the prayer, he added a few words of his own, to the effect "that his only desire, when this sublunary existence was over—when he had passed through this valley of tears and of the shadow of death—um—um—was a reunion with his dear—um—um—spiritual sister, in—um—um—eternity."

At last the prolonged religious service was over ; the company, in sables, crape, and weepers, issued forth from the dining-room, and filled the carriages, and drew up the glasses, that they might laugh and talk at their ease—at least, unseen by the servants, tenants, and other rank and file, who followed on foot in the rear ; and then the funeral train rolled slowly along the gravelled avenue—the lofty hearse, with its forest of sable plumage, nodding under the tall sycamores, as it led the way to the old family vault, in the ancient and secluded parish burial-ground, which lay a few miles off.

All became silent in the spacious mansion, where Amy Lee and I were left with the females of the establishment.

Amy passed into the garden ; I followed, and found her seated in her favourite arbour, which was formed of thick cypress and holly. She had only tied a handkerchief over her thick dark hair, and looked very pretty and piquant, as she smiled sadly, and held out her little hands to me in welcome, as I approached.

"I knew you would follow me," said she.

"Dear, dear Amy," I exclaimed, and pressed her to my breast.

Then she burst into tears and relapsed into silence, for the events of the past week, and more especially of that solemn day, had overpowered her. She placed her cheek upon my shoulder, and thus we sat reclined together and hand in hand, full of thought and in silence, heedless of the keen and frosty air, for—I know not how long—but until we heard the sound of carriages driven rapidly along the hard frozen highway, between the leafless hedgerows, and then over the rough gravel of the echoing avenue, as Colonel Rose, and a few more of those friends who conceived themselves to be more immediately concerned, returned, to be present at the reading of the will—as Mr. Quirky had confidentially assured all, of the existence of one.

The will ! I now thought of the important part I had played in secret, concerning that remarkable document, and all the pulses of my heart beat quicker, when I beheld Messieurs Quirky and Macfarisee ascend the steps of the portico, and re-enter the dining-room, whither they desired me to bring up the green bag, and remain beside them.

Colonel Rose was again leaning against the marble mantelpiece, with nearly the same soldierly air of indifference as before. He had seen so much of stirring life and military service—withal, he was so *blasé* and thoroughly used up—that nothing now could interest him much. The faces of a few distant relations, or connections, or friends (I know not which they were) who were present, were now less solemn than before ; a species of rubicon had been passed ; the interment—a disagreeable prelude—had been got over ; they were now appetised for dinner, and partook freely of the wines at a side-table, looking from time to time at Messrs. Quirky and Macfarisee, who were whispering together, and fumbling, somewhat nervously and ostentatiously,

after certain real or imaginary documents, in the depth of the aforesaid green bag.

"My sister-in-law left a will, I think you said, gentlemen?" observed Colonel Rose.

"So she told me, my dear colonel—so she told me," replied Mr. Quirky, with his professional smile.

"Told you, sir. Did you not prepare it in due and legal form?" asked the colonel sharply.

"No. It was, I understood her to say, a holograph testament of the mode in which she wished her worldly possessions——"

"The dross of this life, as she truly termed them," interrupted Macfarisee.

"Disposed of, and to whom?"

"Exactly so. Ah, my dear colonel, she walked through this vale of tears with an upright step. Blessed are the dead, who die as she died."

"Well, but the will, Mr. Macfarisee," said the colonel impatiently.

"Nothing now remains but to read the last melancholy wishes of our deceased sister in the spirit."

"But where the deuce are they expressed?"

"In a document, committed, I believe, to the custody of Miss Amy Lee."

"I have a sealed paper which you gave me, sir, some weeks ago," said Amy, rising timidly from her seat.

"Yes—by your aunt's express order," said Mr. Quirky, hurriedly; "it is her will—will you please to produce it?"

Amy hastened to her desk, opened it, and presented the sealed packet to Macfarisee.

"Thank you, my dear child—compose yourself and be seated; there—that will do. Ah me! ah me! such a day of trial this has been for us all!"

Macfarisee tried to look more solemn than ever, and thrice wiped his gold spectacles, as if his emotion had

dimmed them. I saw him tremble visibly, as he broke the large red seal which bore Mrs. Rose's coat of arms in a widow's lozenge, and drew forth the contents, which he believed were to transfer Applewood, and all within and upon it, to him and his heirs for ever. On unfolding it, he started—changed colour, and his stealthy eyes dilated and filled with a baleful gleam. He looked under, over, and through his spectacles. He turned the paper round, and viewed it in every way with a bewildered or astounded air.

It was totally *blank*!

He grew absolutely peagreen, and muttered something like a malediction deeply and huskily under his breath; he then examined the envelope, to see if his initials were still above the seal, where in a moment of cunning and sudden suspicion he had written them. The cover had evidently never been broken before; then where was the will?—or how was a sheet of blank paper substituted for it? He glanced at Amy—he glared at me; the perspiration started in white bead-drops on his mean and contracted brow, and he looked around him, with such an aspect of bewilderment, that Colonel Rose exclaimed,—

“Hollo, sir,—what the devil is the matter?”

“Matter, sir—matter—why, a felony has been committed here.”

“Felony?” reiterated the colonel, now thoroughly roused, and in a voice of thunder, which brought all the hungry expectants to their feet; “what the deuce do you mean?”

“Can this be a *deceptio visus*?” groaned Macfarisee.

“It is no visual deception,” said the sharp voice of Mr. Quirky, as he came to the aid of his bewildered legal brother; “for this envelope once contained the last will and testament of our deceased friend—a document to which I was a witness, and it must have been abstracted or destroyed.”

"S'death ! who in this house would be guilty of such an act ?" demanded Colonel Rose, reddening with anger, and drawing up his soldier-like figure to its full height.

"She has destroyed the will," whined Macfarisee, who was now ashy pale with rage and disappointed avarice, and trembled in every limb.

"She—who—mean you my sister-in-law ?"

"No, colonel ; *she* was all saintly purity, and covered by it as by a shining garment."

"I will thank you, sir, to come to a halt with this miserable cant," said Colonel Rose contemptuously ; "say *who* then ?"

"Miss Amy Lee."

"Amy Lee ?—Impossible ; fellow, you rave !"

"Into her custody I gave it ; she whom her good aunt reared in the paths of rectitude, deeming her a lamb rescued from the slaughter, a brand snatched from the burning ; but Satan is in her heart,—she has destroyed the will, and ruined her own soul !"

Overwhelmed by this strange and sudden accusation, poor Amy's first outburst of pride and ladylike indignation gave way to softness and a torrent of tears ; while the defeated Macfarisee trod hastily to and fro, muttering with his thin lips,—

"She has destroyed it,—destroyed a legal document—committed a felony,—tempted—tempted by——"

"By whom, sir ?" demanded Colonel Rose, while sternly confronting him ; "be explicit, sir, or by Heaven, I'll knock you down. By whom ?"

"The devil, who is ever walking abroad, seeking whom he may devour."

"Had you mentioned anyone else, sir, by Jove, I would have shied you over that window into the shrubbery. But now, Mr. Nathaniel Macfarisee, as we have had enough of this most unusual and unseemly scene, and as you and your

partner allege you both saw this missing document, perhaps you will have the goodness to state, to the best of your recollection, the tenor of it?"

"I beg leave to decline affording any information anent it, unless when examined on oath, before a justice of the peace," said Quirky, sullenly and impertinently; for he was cunning as a magpie.

"And I also decline to do so, even then, as oaths are against my conscience," added Macfarisee, "the Scripture saith, 'swear not,' and I will not swear."

The most minute search failed to discover among the repositories of the deceased the least scrap of paper, in any way resembling a will, holograph or otherwise; and ultimately, Messrs. Quirky and Macfarisee were obliged to retire from Applewood, without beat of drum, leaving Amy Lee the sole and acknowledged heiress of the late proprietress; and very haughtily and coldly the colonel bade them farewell, as they stepped into one of the mourning coaches, and for greater freedom of surmise and conversation, no doubt, desired me to "mount beside the driver." We were driven back to town just as the snow-flakes began to fall drearily aslant the dark-grey northern sky, upon the gloomy thickets and silent hills. I remember that I was without a great-coat; but I did not feel cold, for my heart danced with joy at the reflection of how I had outwitted two of the sharpest lawyers that ever pocketted a fee.

CHAPTER X.

MAHOGANY *v.* LAW

FOR some time after this event, Macfarisee was sullen as a Greenland bear, and we heard very little scripture quoted. Indeed, I am uncertain whether I did not hear him mutter a pretty distinct "d—n" on one or two occasions.

I saw Amy at intervals, though the wintry weather and ten miles of snow-covered country that lay between us were serious barriers to frequent meetings. Moreover, the colonel's residence at Applewood had changed the tenor of life and society there. Mr. Jedediah Pawkie and the godly elders of his synagogue were banished therefrom with very little ceremony, and the aspect of the colonel's Malay servant seemed, as the incarnation of sin, to suggest very unpleasant ideas to their minds. The country at this time was swarming with troops, as an invasion was expected from France. Horse, foot, artillery, line, fencibles, and militia (to say nothing of volunteers), were quartered everywhere, and, as a regiment of remarkably smart light infantry (the old 43rd, I think) occupied a temporary wooden barrack at the village of Applewood, the house and lawn became the daily resort and lounge of the officers, to whom the colonel's full-bodied old port and the billiard-room proved very acceptable.

I trembled for my influence over Amy; yet I never hinted, even in the most distant manner, as to whose mistake she was indebted for becoming the heiress of her aunt. Indeed, much as I boyishly loved this girl, and brilliant though her prospects, I had soon other things given me to think of.

About this time, I remember there occurred a terrible

episode, which seriously affected the health of my mother, and of Lotty too. A travelling pedlar, one of those itinerant jewellers, who were much more numerous in those years than in the present, made his appearance at our cottage one day, and opening his pack or box on the sill of the window, at which my mother was seated, reading, insisted on displaying his store of gold and silver watches, rings, bracelets, baubles, and thimbles ; and offered to buy old metals, to barter or exchange, with all that pertinacity peculiar to his craft. Though very pressing, he loudly repudiated the most remote idea of wishing for profit on any transaction. He had also some antiques, and little Indian curiosities, which my mother was examining with some interest, when suddenly her eyes dilated, and she uttered a cry, between a shriek and a moan,—a terrible cry, which seems yet, at times, to ring in my ears, and which made the startled pedlar spring nearly a yard high, and spill half his stock upon the parlour floor. Among the articles which he termed his curiosities, her eye had detected a little round plate of silver, to which a thin fragment of bone was attached, and on it was engraved, “Oliver Ellis, Captain, 21st Fusiliers.”

It was the plate with which my father’s head had been trepanned, after the storming of the fort at Skenesborough, and whereon, as I have mentioned elsewhere, he had fancifully had his name, rank, and the number of his regiment, engraved. On seeing this affecting and terrible memento, the poor old lady fainted, and the pedlar, in great alarm, bundled up his wares and departed with precipitation—for his dealings were not always on the side of honesty, and, not knowing what manner of scrape he had fallen into, he left the village, and long before my mother recovered was gone beyond recall.

With the knowledge that her husband was buried in his soldier’s grave, far, far away, on the bank of the mighty Hudson, where the kind hands of dear comrades had heaped

the green sods over him, she had learned to be content and resigned to her bereavement, as the fortune of war and the will of God ; but now, with this new knowledge that his last resting-place had been violated,—when, or by whom, or under what circumstances, she could never learn,—made her wretched indeed ! A high fever was the result, and a long illness, from which she was saved with the utmost difficulty. Of the devil of a pedlar who caused all this evil, we could never discover the slightest trace. He had come and gone like the “Sandman” of the German romance, or that unpleasantly ubiquitous personage, with whom our friend Dr. Twaddel, wrestled in the spirit, every Sunday.

While my mind was occupied by this affair, the thoughts of the worthy Mr. Macfarisee were ever running on the missing will. I know not whether he connected *me* with its disappearance, but he was now more exacting, more annoying, and more pettily tyrannical than ever, and his concealed wrath hovered over my devoted head, like the sword that erst hung by a horse’s hair above the pericranium of Damocles. One day, I was alone in Macfarisee’s business-room, when happening to open a book near to me, the following passage struck my eye :—

“Why should I wear out a dreary life in poverty and obscurity, while I loathe one and detest the other ? There are, who talk of calm content, of gliding unnoticed through the road of life : let those who like such ignoble path follow it. Did I make myself ? Did I wish to enter on this mortal struggle ? Did I give myself feelings, ideas, or wishes ? My future rests upon my belief, as if I could believe what I chose.”

These questions filled me with strange thoughts, and I sank into one of my day-dreams, from which I was roused by the unwelcome entrance of Macfarisee. Perceiving that no other person was present, he began, in an unusually bland

tone of voice, to refer to the scene that took place at Applewood on the day of the funeral, adding,—

“There is something very mysterious, Oliver Ellis, in the disappearance of that document !”

“So I have heard you say, sir, many times.”

“Ay,—but there is something more than mysterious, and to that I have a clue,” said he, impressively, while his stealthy eyes seemed to glare into mine, and I could not repress an emotion of discomfort and alarm.

“Indeed !” I exclaimed ; “but in whatever way Mrs. Rose penned her will, she may have changed her mind before death.”

“No, I do not think so ; she was a woman who walked in the way of the Lord, and now dwells in peace for ever. She meant that all she possessed should become the inheritance of His servants, for His glory and their *comfort*,” said he ; and while canting thus, he ground his sharp teeth at the thought of all that had escaped him. “No, no,—she knew who was her light and her salvation.”

“Do you mean the Reverend Mr. Pawkie ?” I asked, innocently.

“Listen to me,” said he ; “you have been at Applewood frequently and unknown to *me*,—unknown for a time, at least. You have seen Miss Amy Lee in the woods and in the park——”

“I have been watched—followed !” I began, with a sudden glow of rage and just indignation, as I instantly saw some of the meaner clerks of the firm having been guilty of this act of espionage.

“*How* I came to know this, matters not—you do not deny the fact ?”

“Most certainly I do not,” said I ; “and what then ?”

“Simply this, my dear, deluded boy,” he replied, pressing my arm with his long, lean, ugly fingers, while his sharp visage was lighted by such a smile as sin might wear on the

threshold of hell ; “ I know that Miss Amy burned her aunt’s will, lest overmuch of her earthly inheritance might go to the faithful servants of the Lord, and those who twice yearly serve at His tabernacle. I *know* that she *burned* the will, and that *you* were present when she did so. We have pretty ample proofs of the place, time, and circumstances ; and if you will give me a holograph statement to this effect—a statement supposed to be written under emotions of remorse—I will give you a present of fifty guineas just now, and one hundred more after. I know, my dear young friend, that you are not like those of whom Paul wrote to Timothy, as ‘ given to wine, a striker, or greedy of filthy lucre, but patient and *not* covetous ; ’ and through you I would seek the means of punishing this girl, to lead her, by chastisement, from the snares of the devil, who hath taken her captive—and from the life of sin and pleasure she leads, being, as the blessed scripture truly saith, really dead while she liveth. Do you understand me, my dear young man ? ”

I stood for a full minute in silence ; for this ill-judged and barefaced combination of hypocrisy and temptation to crime filled me with such rage and confusion, that I knew not what to reply.

“ Sir ! ” I stammered.

“ Reflect on all my good friend has urged, Mr. Ellis,” said Quirky, appearing suddenly behind me.

“ I *have* reflected,” said I, in a breathless voice, while playing nervously with a mahogany ruler—a pretty heavy one too.

“ Then pen us the required statement—that you saw the girl, Amy Lee, burn her aunt’s will ? ”

“ But I never witnessed any such act,” I replied. While panting with rage, I spoke slowly to gather time for thought and action. “ I repeat, sir, that I never beheld any such deed ! ”

"But you *might* have seen it," said Macfarisee, suavely, and with a grimace which he meant to be excessively conciliating; "you might, my dear boy, and such a statement from you is necessary to complete a plan we have in view, to enforce the ends of justice and law, which are the same; for as the holy apostle saith, 'Law is good, if a man use it *lawfully*,' First Timothy, chapter first, hey-ho-hum!"

"What motive have you in view?"

"What the deuce have you, or such as you, to do with the motives or morals of those who employ you?" demanded Quirky, whose natural insolence for the moment got entirely the better of his prudence.

"Sir, sir,—I am a gentleman!"

"A *gentleman*—God help us! a fine gentleman, to whom we pay thirty pounds per annum."

"If I am not, my father was at least a gentleman," said I, almost choking with the conflict of suppressed emotions; "he was an officer, who died in action——"

"If he had been a thief who died on the gallows, it were all the same to me," replied the legal bully; "I want neither gentlemen, nor their sons, in my office. I want only my orders obeyed; my work, my business done. I want——"

"Stay, Mr. Quirky; do stop, pray," interposed Macfarisee, with an air of solemnity and alarm. "This outbreak is useless; if one hundred and fifty guineas——"

"Will not tempt me, the hard words and gratuitous insolence of an underbred villain are less likely to do so," I exclaimed; and by one blow of the ponderous ruler stretched Mr. Quirky bleeding and senseless at my feet. Then a flame seemed to pass before my eyes, a shock like electricity ran over every fibre, and feeling my heart grow wild with rage and excitement, I sprang upon the excited Macfarisee just as he was rushing to the bellrope. Grasping his white neckcloth by one hand, I showered my blows upon his bald caput and shoulders with the other, until, in reeling back-

ward, he stumbled over Quirky, and falling heavily against a writing-table, lay still as if dead. A wilder spirit of mischief and destruction was now added to my long-pent-up hatred ; and with the mischief of a boy, or of an enraged monkey, I snatched sundry bundles of papers, tore some to pieces, heaped others on the fire, spilled the contents of a large inkbottle over everything, threw down the tables and chairs, and with an *io pæan* of triumph, rushed from the field of battle, flourishing my ruler like the truncheon of a conqueror.

Just as I sprang down stairs into the street, taking three steps at a time, a window was opened overhead, and I heard the shrill voice of Macfarisee shouting,—

“ The guard ! the guard ! ”

There were no police, and this was the usual cry when the soldiers of the city watch were required. The evening was dusk now, and I ran through the thoroughfares bare-headed and grasping tightly my weapon—for my blood was yet up, and I would without shrinking have faced all the charged bayonets of the city guard ; but I ran on—on—I knew not, and cared not whither.

CHAPTER XI.

EDINBURGH IN 1792.

THE house from which I had just issued stood nearly opposite to the old Tolbooth, or Heart of Midlothian, which was built almost in the centre of the High Street, and in the lower story thereof were nightly lodged a lieutenant with a party of the ancient city guard. The cries of Macfarisee readily reached the sentinel at the door, and he turned out the watch. Armed with fixed bayonets and Lochaber axes, they issued forth in pursuit ; but I fled before them like an arrow and darted down the Lord President's Stairs, which, I knew communicated with the Fishmarket Close, and the entrance to which was in a great tenement on the eastern side of the Parliament-square—all since removed and numbered with the things that were. I plunged breathlessly down the steep Close, cries of "The guard ! the guard ! to the Tolbooth with him," following me, for these shouts, though uttered heedlessly by those I passed, were additional incentives to flight ; and panting with rage and fear, I sped on, while I could hear the guardsmen swearing in Gaelic behind me. I could also hear the clank of their terrible Lochaber axes, which were furnished with sharp hooks, wherewith to catch fugitives, or to drag the refractory, and I could see the dim glimmer of their large horn lanterns, as I crossed the narrow Cowgate and rushed up the steep College Wynd towards a gate in the town wall known as the Potter Row Porte. Here stood a sentinel, who put his axe before me and demanded sixpence for allowing me to pass. I pretended to search my pockets, wherein I had not a stiver ; and while thus throwing him off his guard, darted through the barrier,

and, with a shout of triumph, rushed into the darkness beyond. My first impulse was to run into the country, and take refuge in the village where my mother's cottage stood ; but a fear lest Macfarisee might send the guards there first, deterred me ; and hastening to the Meadows, which lie southward of the city, and were then, as now, a lonely and sequestered place, rendered unwholesome by swamps, being the bed of an ancient lake, and dangerous as the haunt of armed footpads, robbers, and outcasts. I had nothing to lose but my liberty, and they were not likely to deprive me of that.

In those meadows are a few stone seats placed at intervals under the trees. On one of these I seated myself, and began to reflect on the situation of my affairs. Though moonless, the sky was clear, and the night was warm and pleasant. The intense solitude of the place contrasted with the recent fiery turmoil of my own thoughts. I felt for a time all the visionary independence of youth : I had left, as it were, all my fetters behind me ; but there were my mother, little Lotty, and Amy Lee ! How sore, and sad, and bitter, the thoughts of them made my aching heart ! The bloody gash on the head of Quirky, and the malevolent smile of Macfarisee, seemed to haunt me amid the darkness, and vague fears came over me.

I thought of how gladly I would work hard, even for a pittance, if well treated ; I thought of my own friendlessness, and of all I had endured at the hands of these sanctimonious knaves—these legal parvenus—but my fury had passed away, and I felt it would have been a relief to my soul, could I have wept bitterly.

The low-muttered voices of a number of men approaching now fell upon my ear. I thought immediately of the guard, and seeking a more sequestered place, climbed up a beech tree, amid the thick foliage of which I deemed myself perfectly secure. I had not been perched there three minutes,

when, to my terror, I heard voices on all sides of me, and beheld numbers of men coming straight towards the place of my concealment. There was a tingling sensation in my ears, and my breath came thick and fast ; while, as if they had sprung from the swampy turf, in an incredibly short space of time, the beech tree was environed by a mob of more than a thousand men, many of whom were armed, as I could perceive swords, pikes, and muskets among them. A torch was now lighted, and its wavering gleam fell redly on their faces—the grim and dirty faces of an excited and unwashed multitude—as, amid cries of “ Robert Watt—Robert Watt—hurrah ! ” they were all turned to one point, where an orator or leader, who was elevated on the shoulders of four men, proceeded to harangue them in a subdued but determined tone of voice.

He was a pale, sallow-visaged and sad-eyed young man, who in no way suggested the idea of a patriot or hero.

My anxiety now increased to agony, when I found myself compelled to act the spy upon a band of these desperate men, who, at that period, styled themselves the “ Friends of the People ”—a small but desperate section, who were instigated to revolt against all monarchical government, and who had corresponding societies in all parts of Great Britain—men whose avowed object was to reform a very defective parliamentary representation, while, ultimately, they aimed at the seizure of the Castle of Edinburgh, the plunder of the banks and government offices, and the capture, if not the murder, of all the senators of the College of Justice, and other heads of departments, civil, military, and religious.

If discovered by these worthies on my perch in the tree, I had little doubt they would have shot me like a sparrow, and perhaps buried me on the ground where they stood to silence my tongue for ever. I scarcely dared to breathe. I thought of my mother, and imagined her sensations, if I were found there murdered, or if I disappeared for ever, like

a bubble on a stream, and, like many other honest persons, was moved to tears, by the prospect of my own untimely demise. Meanwhile the mass below me swayed to and fro ; the torches continued to sputter and gleam, and the orator to spout treason, fire and sword against all crowned heads, especially "the old tyrant who dwelt in the castle of Windsor ;" liberty, equality, fraternity—the rights of men—oppression, chains and slavery—kings and tyrants, were the staple subjects of his inflammatory discourse, until he mentioned the slave trade and borough reform, in connection with the name of Henry Dundas, the city member, when a yell of hatred broke from the multitude, with cries of,—

"To the lamp-post with him !"

"Up with the barricades !"

"Down with the three estates—kings, lords, and clergy !"

Then this strange band, after giving three cheers for Tom Paine and Robert Watt, passed a unanimous resolution to burn the Tory M.P. in effigy on the next day, the 4th of June, the anniversary of George the Third's birth. They uprooted some hundred yards of paling for staves to arm them with ; the torch was extinguished ; the orator descended from his perch ; in a few minutes they had all disappeared, and the wooded parks became voiceless and silent as before.

This leader was that unfortunate Robert Watt, who, on the 15th of the succeeding October (for the very same opinions which he there expressed so freely) was drawn on a low hurdle, heavily chained, to the Castle Hill of Edinburgh, and had his head struck from his body by three blows of an axe, pursuant to a sentence passed on him by the Lord Justice General of Scotland.

I drew a long breath when they separated, deeming that I had narrowly escaped a sudden death. Still I was afraid to leave my retreat altogether ; so descending from the

beech, I sought a place where the grass was soft and dry at the root of an old oak tree, and lay down to think over my situation, and the truths I had heard—for much that was solemn and stern truth had fallen from the lips of Robert Watt. I had ample food for reflection, but amid it I fell into a sound and heavy sleep.

In the year of which I write—to wit, 1792—the Scottish capital had made but little progress (as we *now* understand that great and comprehensive word) since the commencement of the century, save in noisy professions of religion, and an external air of sanctity to cloak hypocrisy and vice.

Though a new town on the north, and another on the south, were rising into existence, the mass of the citizens dwelt yet within the steep, narrow closes and wynds of the ancient city, from which many made vows they would never remove. The streets were without sewerage, and dimly lighted by a few oil-lamps, which were placed on wooden posts at long intervals. People dined at two o'clock; and were all a-bed by eleven. The High Street alone was well watched. There, the city guard, a body of three hundred old soldiers, who wore the square-skirted red coats and cocked hats of Queen Anne's time, and were armed with the long muskets and bayonets, and the Lochaber axes used by Scottish regiments in her wars, were the custodiers of the public safety. Being all Highlanders, they spoke no language save the Celtic, and were alternately the jest and the terror of the people. Women were still flogged at a cart's-tail, or drummed through the streets for petty offences, and poor debtors begged for alms at the door of St. Giles', as they had done in the days of the Jameses.

Though the capital was little changed in its *external* aspect, the hearty old Scottish spirit was dead, or dying fast; and so narrow-minded were the people, that a few years before, a clergyman had to strip off his gown and turn soldier, for having penned a tragedy, which now ranks as one of the

British Classics. I allude to Home, the author of "Douglas." Any one who entered a theatre, especially on a Saturday ; or read a novel, especially on a Sunday ; or who, on that grim Scottish day of silence or psalmsinging, ventured to whistle or hum an air, received public censure ; for now it seemed as if fasting and preaching, hypocrisy and craft, were all to flourish together, each bearing a due proportion to the progress of the other. Thus choked amid such evil weeds, nothing truly good, or great, or pure, can thrive or be attempted, without exciting the envy of some, or the contumely of others ; for many men are there, who would oppose even the redemption of mankind, if to do so suited the advancement of their vulgarly-sectarian, selfishly-political, or personal interests—and so, as Macfarisee would say, "the wicked flourished like the green bay tree." So still the tide rolls on—religion becoming a surly burlesque—society a system of miserable cliques, and the nation itself a provincial tradition.

In 1792 the ideas of the people were so contracted and thoroughly local, that the appearance of a strange carriage in the streets put all Edinburgh a-tiptoe for three days to discover its owner—and so low had the old military spirit sunk, that the appearance of the pirate Paul Jones in the river, in 1779, threw eighty thousand citizens into a paroxysm of terror.

Few persons left, and fewer still visited, Edinburgh in those days. Any one departing thence for London—perhaps the great and only event of a long stupid and monotonous life—cautiously settled his worldly affairs by will, was duly prayed for in "the kirk"—took solemn leave of his weeping relations, and was escorted by all his friends to the eastern gate of the town ; and all were there again to receive and conduct him with acclamations to his home in some dingy close of the middle ages, when he returned three months after, by the well-armed stage-coach, "General

Wolfe" or the letter-of-marque smack, "The Lovely Jenny," carrying four 6-pounders—and brimful of hair-breadth escapes from footpads and masked highwaymen, to be related, amid due libations of reeking whiskey toddy, to a gaping circle of provincials.

By the spread of education among the lower, and the almost general flight of the upper classes, the old order of society became inverted. Dukes and earls no longer lived in the Canongate; nor lords, nor lairds, nor aristocratic grandmothers, who remembered "the bonnie prince" dancing in Holyrood, or the cannon that boomed for his downfall at Culloden; nothing now remained to Scotland, but the dregs and lees of her once warlike and kingly post—the sour kirk and the subtle law.

So matters had been going on for years, and all had been quiet in the Scottish capital since the terrible Porteous mob of 1735, and the irruption of the Clans ten years later, until this year, 1792, when the political convulsions in France began to affect their well-wishers in Scotland, a country so long neglected by a foreign race of kings and an alien peerage, as to have lost all sympathy for either; thus the sentiments of republicanism spread like a contagion among certain classes, who began to arm them in secret—to form clubs, on the principle of those over which Marat and others presided in Paris, and to designate themselves, "The Friends of the People."

CHAPTER XII.

THE FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE.

THE morning of the 4th of June dawned in all the beauty of the month. The day came in brilliantly and clear ; but the idea pressed heavily on my heart that, for the *first* time in my life, I had been absent a whole night from my mother's roof ; and what would be her thoughts—what might her terrors be ? The foliage of the old trees was waving on the wind. From the flat green meadows a gauze-like haze was exhaled by the sun, in whose beams, the myriad windows of the city and the clocks of its churches were glittering as if illuminated for a festival. The wild flowers which grew by those pools of water which formed the last remnants of the ancient Burghloch, and in which the black coot and the little teal duck swam, were waving their cups and petals to and fro, as the honey bees crept into them ; and the mavis and merle sang merrily above the pale-green billows of the ripening corn that grew on the slopes beyond.

I *felt* all the beauty of the summer morning ; but I was also sensible of being chill and stiffened by the effects of a night passed in the open air. I thought of Amy Lee—of Applewood ; and then something of a glow came over my wayward heart on reflecting that I was free—free by the act that made me so ; yet, withal, I was anxious—restless—unhappy. How little could I foresee all that was before me !

As the morning bells began to toll, there came a hum from the rousing city. All the boys within its walls were busy ; for on this great holiday many thousand tiny canons, with many a musket and pistol, were incessantly

exploding, bonfires were blazing everywhere, all the lamp-posts were decorated with green boughs, the statues of Charles II. and George Heriot were crowned with laurel and covered with flowers. According to immemorial custom, the Lord Provost was to entertain the local notorieties of Edinburgh with sweetmeats and wine in the stately old Parliament House, in front of which the three hundred bayonets of the city guard were under arms to fire a rattling volley between every toast, while the bells rang joyously, and the cannon of the castle shook the tall mansions of the ancient city, as they boomed over her echoing hills, in honour of the good old king's birthday.

On this 4th of June there were many who held aloof from all this hearty old loyalty—many who whispered together in archways and narrow alleys—in taverns and at street corners, and who muttered under their breath.

These were the Friends of the People, and the foes of kings, of peers, and prelates.

On this occasion the magistrates anticipated various disturbances, notwithstanding the loud manifestations of loyalty, and had taken the precaution of bringing a few troops of the 2nd Dragoon Guards into the city. Threatening letters had been addressed to the provost, and placards of a seditious nature had been strewed overnight in the streets. The remains of others were still fluttering on the walls where the officials of the city had defaced them. The minds of the people and of the soldiers became inflamed against each other; for the whole conduct of the magistrates had been, as usual on such occasions, most unwise.

Afraid to go home, lest my present *bête noir* Macfarissee might have sent some of the city guard there to inquire after me, I slipped into the city with a few country folks who were proceeding to market, and water-carriers, who with their slung barrels were plodding to the public wells. Then I saw by the proclamations which were everywhere posted

up, by the sentinels of the city guard being doubled on all the banks, the Parliament House, and other public buildings, that a riot was expected ; and in confirmation thereof, three troops of heavy cavalry rode in sections up the High Street at an easy trot, with their swords glittering, their powdered hair seeming all white as new-fallen snow, and their long queues hanging straight down to the back-buttons of their square-tailed red coats ; while the kettle-drums beat, and their brass trumpets, from each of which a royal standard hung, blew sharply defiance to the people, who, no way daunted by their splendid aspect or the gigantic cocked-hats then worn by the Guards, hooted loudly, and threw squibs and fireworks among them.

“ No dragoons ! no military tyranny ! ” cried some.

“ Off—off ! down with the Tory Provost ! ” cried others.

“ Johnnie Cope ! Johnnie Cope ! be off to Preston Pans ! ”

This was to taunt the cavalry, whom the people knew represented the regiment of Sir John Cope. The dragoons retorted, and greatly irritated their tormentors, “ by cursing them for Scotch rebels ! ” as the *Intelligencer* relates. I had no money ; but curiosity to see what might ensue prevented me from feeling hungry at the time, so morning soon passed into noon.

The 2nd Dragoon Guards formed line across the broad High Street, cutting off all communication between the upper and lower parts of it, and thus causing a great crowd to assemble ; a few of these were petulant and clamorous, but by far the greater number were merely sullen spectators. Amid the excitement consequent to the ringing of bells, the huzzahs that came through the tall gothic windows of the ancient Parliament House, the rattle of the drums that were placed in its lobby, and the volleys of the city guard, who, with all their officers in full uniform, with epaulette, sash and gorget, were formed in line across the square, where they fired a *feu-de-joie* between every toast given at the

Provost's *déjeuner*, various scuffles took place. A drunken tailor fell among the troop-horses, and was nearly trampled to death by one. He was quickly dragged forth by the fast-gathering populace, who immediately assailed the unfortunate rider by a storm of squibs, rockets, stones, and abuse. This so greatly exasperated the trooper, that on seeing a milkman, named William Yule, attempting to force a passage through the ranks, he made a downward cut at him with his sword, and I saw the man's left cheek shred off, like a slice from a water-melon.

The yells, hootings, cries and rage of the mob in front, who, as usual, were urged on by those who were behind, and who were too artful to make themselves prominent, now knew no bounds. Many, armed with staves and shovels, now began to appear as if by magic. I saw one or two pikeheads glittering in the sunshine, and it became evident that a dangerous collision was impending ; for men's blood was getting heated, though they scarcely knew why.

While the cavalry held their position at the cross, and a vulgar and pompous group of startled magistrates, wearing scarlet gowns, grotesque cocked-hats, gold chains, and other mummary of office, were in conference with the major commanding, that gallant officer got rapidly flushed (as no less than six-and-thirty toasts had been quaffed that morning at the civic *déjeuner*), and scarcely attended to the remarks of the provost, who now asked his advice—then entreated the mob to disperse, and anon threatened them with the Riot Act, arrests, fire, and sword. During this scene in the Parliament Square, a great concourse emerged from some of the closes further down, and debouching upon the street, wheeled to the south, round the Tron church, and passed rapidly along the South Bridge, cheering vociferously. I rushed away to see what this portended, and soon found myself involved in the living surge, that rolled towards the southern portion of the city.

At that moment, the report of two heavy cannon fired in rapid succession pealed from the castle walls, through the clear sunny air.

This was a signal, pre-arranged, to bring in a fresh force of cavalry, and for the *Hythe* frigate and *Tartar* cutter, which were lying off Leith, to land at once their seamen and marines, for the magistrates of the city, at all times famous for their mock servility to the powers that be, were resolved to prevent, by every means in their power, the atrocity—for so they termed it—of committing the M.P.'s wretched image to the flames.

To me, the wild hubbub in which I found myself involved was somewhat soothing. It drew me from my own thoughts, and, borne away by the excitement of the scene, I went willingly on with the furious tide to see the end of this affair, which soon assumed a perilous aspect.

I had a confused recollection of many of the grim, fierce, and dirty visages of those around me, who now seemed most noisy and active. These were all armed with staves, and were "the Friends of the People," who had assembled in the meadows on the preceding evening. Suddenly I saw a human figure elevated above the sea of heads that occupied the entire breadth of the street, amid shouts of,—

"To a lamp-post—a rope, a rope!—to a lamp-post with him!"

The fierce resolution, the coarse brutality, and utter mercilessness of a Scottish mob are well known. I trembled when I saw this miserable wretch buoyed aloft above the sea of human beings, like a cork upon the waves; but a roar of laughter reassured me, and I soon perceived that what excited my fear and sympathy was a ludicrous but carefully-made effigy of the Tory member—an effigy in which nothing of his resemblance was omitted—his ample shirt frill—his white corded breeches and top-boots—his powdered wig, and salmon-coloured coat with carved silver buttons.

Amid the groans and execrations of the multitude, this dummy was duly hanged on a lamp-post, while the glass of the adjacent windows was heard crashing in all directions. A baker's shop was also sacked, and as the loaves and hot rolls went in showers about the street, I caught one of the latter and proceeded at once to breakfast. For the first time I discovered that if I was free—I was hungry.

The image was cut down, and nearly torn to pieces when it fell.

Those qualities which have ever rendered a Scottish riot most terrible, when the decision and cunning of some are combined with the savagery of others, now began to exhibit themselves in wanton assaults upon respectable citizens and the destruction of property, as the still gathering rabble swept on, with their image borne aloft, and poured, like a living flood, into the wide and quiet arena of George Square, filling the air with cries of,—

“Borough reform ! borough reform !”

“Liberty, equality, and fraternity !”

“Down with the ministry !—down with the king !”

“Down with the provost !—he is an enemy to the people !”

For now these phrases, with those of “tyranny, oppression, the rights of men and humanity,” were uttered glibly by all, while the secret manufacture of pikeheads and cutlass blades evinced the ulterior views of those who uttered them.

Such cries now loaded the air, and while the clatter of breaking window-panes rang on every side, as the houses of the square were assailed, and every lamp-post, doorstep, and iron railing became occupied by those who wished to see the fun or outrage—and while all the upper windows and skylights became filled by anxious and terrified faces, the ringleaders, after totally demolishing the windows of Lady Armiston's mansion, and those of Admiral Duncan

and the Lord Advocate—halted and proposed to burn the effigy. While the fire was being piled up and lighted, I saw a tall old gentleman of great stature, and of a singularly noble aspect, with long white hair, advance from one of the houses, resolutely but unwisely, fearlessly, and alone. He attempted to expostulate with the crowd, but in vain—a yell of opprobrium greeted him—and the dress he wore, a blue naval uniform, faced with white and laced with gold, seemed only to excite the ire, rather than the respect, of this degraded rabble. Violent hands were laid upon the old man, but towering up like a stately Hercules, he thrust the assailants back resolutely, as if he still stood upon the deck of the *Venerable*, for this white-haired gentleman was the Viscount Duncan, the conqueror of De Winter, the future hero of Camperdown, he who shared with old Rodney the glory of Cape St. Vincent.

A few, less brutal than their compeers, forced the admiral kindly into his own house, and shut the door; and then, amid a shout that made the welkin ring, the effigy of his kinsman, Henry Dundas, was committed to the flames.

While the materials of which it was composed—straw, rags, pitch, rosin, and gunpowder—were all blazing merrily, and the people were all whooping, dancing, and cheering round it, there was a sudden cry—

“The soldiers—here come the soldiers!”

Scrambling up a lamp-post, I saw the glitter of arms in the Bristo Porte, and a mass of red-coats approaching, as six companies of the 53rd, or old Shropshire regiment, came double-quick into the square, and forming line along its northern face, loaded with ball, and all their bright steel ramrods flashed in the sunshine, as they were whirled round and sent home. Then the muskets were “cast about,” and the line stood still.

My heart beat ten pulsations in a second, and my breath

came thick and heavy. I knew not what was about to ensue ; but clinging to my lofty perch, the iron loop of a lamp, I remained, by a species of fascination, gazing at the long line of infantry, standing firm, quiet and motionless as a brick wall, in their coolness and perfect order, presenting a powerful contrast to the clamorous and tumultuary multitude, that surged, and swayed, and howled before them.

“ They will never hurt *me*, at all events,” thought I, and I had a moral confidence in this.

Still unawed, the mob continued their assaults and insults ; the crash of windows went on ; iron railings were menaced next ; then stones and other missiles were showered like hail upon the unoffending 53rd, who long endured this state of matters, with the patience and prudence which are so characteristic of British soldiers.

Suddenly two words of command rang in the air.

“ Ready—present ! ” there was a flash in the sunlight, as the long line of bright barrels were levelled directly at the mob.

“ Fire ! ” added the officer in command. There was a sudden line of smoke, streaked with red flame—a mighty rushing sound, as a sheet of lead tore through the air, flattening out in starry spots on the stone walls, crashing among the shrubbery of the gardens, breaking the iron rails, and seeking human lives among the people, who wavered, shrunk, and fled *en masse* in all directions, leaving twelve of their number bleeding on the ground.

One column fled through Windmill Street, towards the east ; another by Buccleugh Street, towards the south ; and a third rushed by the meadows and Bruntsfield Links, towards the west ; but I observed that those mouthing patriots, “ the Friends of the People,” a few of whom were foolhardy enough to display tricolour cockades, were among the first to fly.

Three men were killed and nine wounded, two of the

latter mortally. One was a young lad named Ritchie, a carver and gilder, the sole support of an aged mother ; he had been drawn there, like myself, in mere curiosity. Another (a very old man) was found dead, with a ball in his body, near the Castle Rock, next day. As the soldiers, in mercy to the people, levelled high, several persons were wounded at the windows ; and a French emigrant of high rank received a ball in the head, just as he drew back the curtain to peep out.

I felt the bullets whistle past me. One actually grazed my left temple ; another splintered the wood of the lamp-post, down which I slid like a squirrel, just as the officer, who had coolly surveyed the effect of the firing, turned once more to his men, and again gave the order,—

“ With ball cartridge, prime and load ! ”

Fear gave wings to my speed. Had the ball that grazed my temple been half an inch more to the right, or had that which splintered the lamp-post been six inches higher, I would assuredly have added one to the catalogue of killed and wounded on that unlucky 4th of June.

I stumbled over the body of a man who was lying on his back moaning in great agony and blowing bells of blood from his mouth, for he had received a ball in the chest ; and I bounded with the speed of a hare towards the meadows, where I once more sought the friendly tree which had last night formed my hiding place.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PRESS-GANG.

AFTER a time, all seemed quiet and still. The mob had entirely disappeared, and I heard the sound of drums and fifes alternately rising and dying away in distance as the troops were marched through the windings of the city back to the castle. I then began to think of returning home. I burned with anxiety to tell my mother and little Lotty, and to pour into the ears of Amy Lee the strange adventures of the last day and night. I almost forgot my fracas with Macfarisee, it seemed quite a secondary affair to a lad who had actually *stood fire*; and for a second time leaving my hiding-place, I prepared to depart.

I had scarcely dropped from my perch and touched the ground, when a loud "hallo" fell on my ear, and turning, I beheld, about forty yards distant, a party of seamen armed with pistols and cutlasses, and headed by an officer who had his sword drawn, and whom, by the black patch on his left eye, I knew to be Lieutenant Cranky, of His Majesty's tender *Tartar*. He had three or four other persons with him; but whether they were prisoners or not, I never lingered to inquire, but at once took to flight, my hair bristling with terror. I knew his party in a moment to be the press-gang, a name so fraught with fear in those days of ill-defined freedom, that I know not in what language to pourtray it now.

"Hollo, you sir,—stop—bring to, or it will be the worse for you!" cried Mr. Cranky, with an oath; but I turned and ran, my heart panting wildly, almost to suffocation. A seaman villanously fired a pistol after me, and the ball stripped the bark from a tree close by. I knew that I

should have a better chance of escape amid the intricacies of the city than in the open country, as any person would readily afford me a refuge from a fate so odious as the hands of the press-gang ; so, after a *détour* and doubling like a hare, I scrambled over two or three walls, regardless of iron spikes and broken bottles, crossed a flower garden, and scarcely knowing whither I went, found my pursuers rapidly distanced as I dashed down a steep old alley, named the Vennel, one side of which is formed by the crenelated rampart, and an old tower or loopholed bastel-house of the city wall. At the foot of this street I saw a ladder, placed under the door of a hayloft ; I cast a hasty glance behind,—no one was near,—I rushed up, drew the ladder in to secure my retreat, and buried myself among the hay, panting, breathless, and bathed in hot perspiration, while my heart leaped almost in agony.

I had just made my quarters good in time, for in less than a minute, three seamen ran hurriedly down the street, and after looking about them, returned, swearing at their fruitless chase, and at Lieutenant Cranky, who had sent them in pursuit.

As they ascended the street, one paused and gave a glance at the hayloft ; but he seemed to dismiss suspicion, if he had one, and passed on. Had I left the ladder, they had doubtless discovered me.

The lagging day passed slowly,—oh, how slowly—on ! Parched with thirst, weary and unrefreshed, I gladly saw the shadows fall to the eastward, and hailed the approach of night.

When all seemed still and sufficiently dark, I prepared to quit my nest, and was just in the act of lowering the ladder, when a man came out of the stable beneath, and uttered such a shout of angry surprise, that I instinctively drew up my means of descent again. He surlily demanded my reason for being about his premises.

I told him frankly that I had been hidden there for some hours to escape the press-gang, and that I was perishing of thirst. On hearing this, his manner at once changed ; he invited me into his house, and offered me food ; but, though totally unable to eat, I drank a jug of stout ale, and feeling invigorated and encouraged anew, I thanked him, and penetrated into the city, which I had to traverse on my way home.

In every direction I saw groups of men in close conversation. Their tones were sullen, and their denunciations of the Lord Provost and Baillies were loud and incessant, for the blood which had been so wantonly shed that day had set the hearts of all on fire with a longing for revenge.

In the cities of Aberdeen and Perth, in the busy town of Dundee and elsewhere, the effigy of the unpopular member had been whipped, burned, blown up or hanged by the populace, whom the magistrates allowed to do so, unmolested, and the mobs dispersed in good-humour, and quite content with their own performances ; but the wise men of Gotham, who ruled in the high places of the capital, being possessed of a nicer sense of honour, or a greater amount of servility—a higher degree of wisdom, or what is much more likely, a profound depth of folly—had resolved to prevent such exhibitions at the bayonet's point, and with what success I have shown.

As I descended the High Street, the groups became more frequent, and more vehement in their language ; and the same phrases used by the "Friends of the People" on the preceding evening were of frequent occurrence. The escapes I had so lately made, caused me to be careful. I shunned every group, and more especially did I shun the red-coated veterans of the city guard.

"Home—home," thought I ; "let me only get home, that I may relate to the dear ones there all I have endured for the last six-and-thirty hours."

Vain wish ! Little did I then foresee all that was before me, ere again I crossed my mother's threshold, or how much I resembled "the leaf which is torn from the tree, and which the wind of heaven blows about."

I observed that the oil-lamps, by which the streets were usually lighted, were all extinguished. Something was evidently on the *tapis*.

I had reached the Tron church, when the appearance of a great and silent mob, marching steadily and compactly, and having aloft a man upon a ladder, made me pause, for there was something in their silence and good order that seemed very portentous of evil. They poured out of the narrow closes and steep wynds on both sides of the dark Canongate, and, as these living streams united, they rolled in one huge mass along the North Bridge towards Prince's Street.

This sight was sufficiently alarming to excite even my curiosity. Escaping the notice of the city guard by their silence and promptitude, they marched on, no sound being heard but the tramp of their feet and the subdued murmur of their voices. All at once, when half-way across that lofty bridge which spans the deep (and then grassy) ravine between the old city and the new, a red and lurid light shone over them, revealing a thousand excited and upturned faces. The man seated on the ladder had kindled a torch, and, while waving it, proceeded to harangue his followers as they bore him on. He was the same sallow-visaged and haggard-eyed orator who I had heard on the preceeding evening—the unfortunate Robert Watt—and while being carried forward by the human tide that rolled along the bridge, I again heard the same sentiments and phrases uttered by him, the staple topics of the Friends of the People, which, however meaningless now, had a terrible signification in those days when pikes were made by thousands in secret, when the guillotine stood in the Place de la Grève, and the blood of Louis XVI. was yet crusted on its platform.

“There was a time when the Scots possessed a spirit that brooked no wrong,” I heard Watt exclaim ; “when they were not so cold in blood that the dastard law froze them, and when people took the part of the oppressed against the foul oppressor. A respect for the law is all very well, but in the end it makes men cowards. Respect for law and social order in the face of injustice and tyranny is like an old organ-tune—a piece of twaddle. I say the people have been wronged, yea, outraged and murdered, and we must have blood for blood ! The law takes care of you—but it grinds, robs, and crushes you to the dust. Will the law save a man whose throat is under the murderer’s knife—or the poor tradesman who starves under the tyranny of the purseproud monopolist ? I respect the law, but I say, curses blight the edict by which our fellow-citizens were this day slain. In our fathers’ days, there was a law in Scotland that he who was taken *redhand* after a slaughter might be put to death in twenty-four hours. The provost is red-hand, and but twelve hours have elapsed—the blood of our citizens is on his soul ! Drag him forth, drag him forth, I say, and to the nearest lamppost with him !”

A yell of applause followed this terrible suggestion.

Again and again he referred to “the God of reason—the social compact between the king and people ; to the Draconian laws, which drenched in blood the idol misnamed justice ; to the downfall of hereditary monarchs, hereditary orders, tyrants, and lawgivers ; equality of rights, the conspiracy of kings against God and man, and the majesty of the sovereign people !”

Then he wound up by quoting some forgotten Jacobin poet, who wrote of monarchs thus :—

“Think not, ye knaves, whom meanness styles the great,
Drones of the church and harpies of the state,—
Whose sires accurst, for blood and plunder famed,
Sultans, or kings, or czars, or emperors named ;

Who taught deluded worlds their claims to own,
And raised them—hell-doomed reptiles !—to a throne ;
Think not I come to croak with omen'd yell,
The dire damnations of your *future Hell* !”

Inspired by this choice piece of poetry, the rabble he led murmured, growled, and applauded ; but whenever he spoke of the events of the past day—the blood that had been shed and the lives lost at the behest of a ministerial place-man, they uttered a yell. Then rushing along Prince Street, they turned into the ample space of St. Andrew Square, which was then a silent and sequestered place, as its mansions were occupied by the wealthy alone. Now a dozen of torches, shaking like tufts of fire, shed their glow upon the excited faces of the mob, and I could perceive a few sword-blades and pikeheads glittering among them. Amid wild hurrahs, the house of the Provost Stirling was assailed ; the windows were dashed to pieces, and the shutters, which had been closed and barricaded, were broken in. Two sentinels of the city guard, who were posted before the door, fled into the fields which lay north of the city ; their boxes were demolished, and the iron rails would soon have been torn up to force the front entrance, which already resounded like a huge drum beneath the blows that were rained upon it by the foremost of the rabble—when, hark !

There was a flash through the darkened sky, as if a meteor had passed over it ; another followed instantly, with the double report of two heavy cannon from the Argyre battery, the signal for the seamen and marines of the *Hythe* and *Tartar*, and for the cavalry again to enter the city.

The first made “the sovereign people” pause in silence !

The second made them waver and commence a retreat from the square ; the retreat soon became a flight, and in three minutes I found myself alone, seated near the railings

on a fragment of a sentrybox, the mob having entirely disappeared.

The provost of the city, whom the republican party had marked as the object of their special vengeance, was at that moment safe within the strong ramparts of the castle ; and in due time he received the reward of his intense respect for the powers that be, and for preventing a straw mannikin being burned. He was made a baronet of Great Britain.

When about to retire, I was suddenly seized by the collar on one side, and found a drawn bayonet opposed to my throat on the other. I was the prisoner of the two fugitive sentinels, who had returned ; and finding the coast clear, resolved to make me a trophy of the night. I struggled for liberty, but in vain, and was forced to accompany them into the old town, where, in ten minutes more, I found myself a prisoner in the Tolbooth—the only one the guard had, as yet, been able to capture on this eventful night.



CHAPTER XIV.

MR. MACROCODILE.

ON finding myself a captive in this gloomy old prison, and in the custody of those grim and grey-haired Celtic *gens-d'armes*, scarcely one of whom could speak (as I have said) any language, save their native gaëlic, I was animated by rage and indignation, and made such a noise, that the surly corporal of the guard, old John Dhu, a warlike remnant of the Black Watch, who once, in the Parliament Square, clove a man to the teeth with his Lochaber axe, threatened, in his best English, to gag me with a drumstick, and get

an order from the captain of the Tolbooth to put me in the water-hole.

This was the lowest dungeon of that ancient prison-house; and though hourly tenanted by the refuse of society, who were gleaned up in the streets, it was a dark, wet vault, arched with stone, and so gloomy that its name alone inspired terror. This threat effectually silenced me; so gulping down my wrath, I resolved to wait till morning, when I was sure that, being innocent of all crime or error, save proving the thickness of the *caput* of Macfarisee, I should at least be set at liberty.

Another night of absence from my anxious mother's home! Boylike, I could scarcely refrain from tears; but tears, like entreaties, were lost alike on Corporal Dhu.

I upbraided, in my heart, Macfarisee as the author of my recent misfortunes, by having excited my just indignation when seeking to bribe and suborn me for his own avaricious and revengeful purposes.

How I passed the night, I do not remember, whether sleeping or waking; but when St. Giles's bell rang the hour of nine, with other prisoners, who had been arrested on suspicion of having been engaged in the riot of the past day, or in the assault on the Provost's house, I was conducted by the guard, with their bayonets fixed, to the presence—not of the magistrates, but of the City Chamberlain—who, in those strange times, possessed a power and a perquisite that will scarcely be recognized or understood now.

He received a fee—some ten or fifteen shillings—for each boy whom he sent into his Majesty's sea-service, and thus every unfortunate urchin whom the guard could glean up after dark, whether innocent or guilty of crime mattered not, stood a very good chance of being sent off to see "the mysteries of the great deep," with a cat-o'-nine-tails at his back by way of an appetiser. In this way, during the early part of the last war, the chamberlain of his Majesty's

ancient capital of Scotland realized a pretty round sum yearly. In Aberdeen, this system of kidnapping was carried to a still more atrocious extent by the magistrates, who sold the boys of the city as slaves to the Dutch and Spaniards.

What mattered it, though many a mother's heart was wrung—perhaps broken—by the sudden and unaccountable disappearance of a dearly-loved son ; or that a fond father found the hope of his future years—his years of old age and helplessness—taken from him, if ten shillings or so were put into the pocket of the douce, pious, and church-going city chamberlain ? Yet such enormities were practised in the capital of a country where once no man brooked a wrong, without appealing to the sword and dagger.

We were conducted into a large panelled room, of antique aspect, opening off one of the great stone staircases of the Royal Exchange. There I was enclosed in a species of bar, with three or four other boys, Corporal Dhu and another grim city guardsman, with his fixed bayonet and long musket, keeping watch over us ; and then, to my dismay, I found myself before Mr. Macrocodile, and one or two other men of similarly ascetic aspect,—

“ Most potent, grave, and reverend seigniors,—
My very noble and approved good masters.

He was the bosom friend of Macfarisee ; for years they had mixed their prayers and their whiskey-punch together, and wept in public over the sinfulness of this stiffnecked generation. He was one of the chief canters in the Reverend Mr. Pawkie's synagogue ; and I knew that he remembered bitterly the affair of his wig, for his red ferret-eyes glared like two living coals when he saw me ; and, during the discussion of one or two petty cases, in which boys were accused of breaking street-lamps, or pelting the city guard—cases

which he heard and dismissed with an air of vast magisterial importance, mixed with no small amount of the cant and slang used in the inferior departments of office, when power is wielded by a *parvenu*.

Just before my "case" was to be heard, as the devil would have it, Macfarisee entered the court, and gave me (though endeavouring to conceal it under his last-will-and-testament expression) a glance full of triumph and malice, to which I replied by one of hatred and defiance. The ruling elder seemed very pale; one of his eyes bore a few rainbow hues; he had a long piece of black plaster on the bridge of his nose, and another on his head, and none of these accessions tended in any way to improve his general appearance.

"Oliver Ellis!" exclaimed a clerk, referring to a paper.

I looked up. Macrocodile and Macfarisee—the Minos and Rhadamanthus, who were to loose or bind, to condemn or pardon—were ominously whispering together; and I felt that in such hands my chance of the latter was remarkably slender indeed; but pride inspired me to put a bold front on the affair.

"Of what am I accused?" I demanded.

"Read the indictment," said Mr. Macrocodile.

"Being found in the square near the Provost's house, when it was assaulted by a mob of villains, last night, refusing to state what was your business there, and maltreating and abusing the soldiers of the city guard when they attempted to take you, the said Oliver Ellis, into custody," snuffled the clerk, laying down the indictment, and resuming his pen.

"They had no right to stop or molest me; the streets are as free to me as to them."

"After dark?" growled Macrocodile, knitting his brows.

"At all hours," said I stoutly.

"You are a contumacious young dog! Do you know

where you are, sir?" he thundered forth; "but we shall teach you to respect the law."

"Hush, my worthy friend, whined Mr. Macfarisee; "remember, there is a Power who chastens those whom He loves; and in His name, let us chasten this wayward one—yea, verily! yea, verily!"

"You are a couple of hypocritical rascals," said I, burning with rage, "and have no right to meddle in my affairs."

"Ay—ay, indeed! we shall soon see that," replied Macrocodile, with a malicious grin.

"He was seen among the rioters who were fired on by the troops, yesterday," said a fat city officer, officiously.

"Are ye sure of that, Archy?"

"I'll take my solemn affidavit of it!"

"Then put him in the stocks at the Tron," suggested Macfarisee. "Yea,—the stocks, where a better man sat."

"Who?" asked Macrocodile.

"The Prophet Jeremiah."

"What! in the stocks at the Tron Kirk?" exclaimed the other, with astonishment.

"No;—for shame, Macrocodile; the prophet sat in the jongs, at the high-gate of Benjamin."

"Then it is too great an honour to put this young rogue in the stocks. By George, I'll pack him off to sea!" he exclaimed, as if it was a sudden and not a common idea. "Where is Mr. Cranky, the lieutenant of the *Tartar* tender? Clerk,—write—Oliver Ellis, sent to sea, by order of the magistrates of Edinburgh, for riotous and disorderly behaviour in the streets of the city, on the 4th day of June—may the Lord direct him to wiser and better ways—and enter my fee opposite his name. Corporal Dhu, march this loon with the others to Leith, and hand them over as volunteers to the lieutenant of the press-gang. Take the back-way, for fear of a rescue. Officer, clear the court!"

Expostulation was vain. I was seized by the collar

a bare bayonet was placed at my throat, while my hands were tied by a cord, and I was dragged out of the room. Then I saw the last of old Macrocodile, his powdered wig, and his wickedness ; and the last, too, of Macfarisee, whose eyes, full of triumphant malice, glared like two bits of grey glass with a light behind them.

To avoid the streets, where considerable excitement yet prevailed, and where strong patrols of the 2nd Dragoon Guards were passing to and fro, they hurried me down a dark stair, at the back of the City Chambers, so dark, that, even now, lamps are burned there by day as well as by night ; thence, by a sequestered alley, named Mary King's Close, and under the arches of the North Bridge. There, with three other boys, poor little ragamuffins, who wept bitterly, I was thrust into a hackney coach. A city guardsman, with his bayonet, mounted beside the driver. Corporal John Dhu got up behind ; and thus escorted, we were driven off to Leith at a furious rate.

I was choking with mingled emotions !

Pride and just indignation struggled with grief, at the prospect of a long separation from my mother and sister, and a terror of and repugnance for the fate upon which I seemed to be hurried so rapidly.

CHAPTER XV

THE PRESSING TENDER.

As the coach passed out of the city, three or four persons on horseback rode in. Among them was a lady in a light-blue riding-habit, with a feather in her hat. She was Amy Lee !

I dashed my fettered hands through the glass windows, and called aloud to her, in the desperate hope that her friends, who were Colonel Rose and some officers of the 43rd, might rescue me ; but the corporal, a stern and merciless old fellow, thrust his bayonet into my left arm, inflicting a wound which gave me considerable pain for weeks after, and the mark of which I shall bear to my grave. Finding there was no remedy for present evil but resignation, I sat still after this ; but my cup of bitterness seemed to be filling fast.

Near the entrance of the Kirkgate, Corporal Dhu dismissed the coach, and showed us the priming in the pan of his musket, swearing that he would shoot the first who attempted to escape as dead as Julius Cæsar ; a threat which, I believe, he was quite capable of fulfilling. He then marched us straight towards the harbour.

We attracted little or no notice as we proceeded ; poor boys, pressed or sent to sea, by order of some tyrant bailie or sheriff, being then a matter of daily occurrence. The old harbour was full of bustle and confusion. Men-of-war boats, manned by smart seamen or smarter marines, each with a standard waving, and a little middy seated in the stern, were shooting to and fro, while the scene was a wondrous medley of nautical uproar. Ships of all kinds, loading or unloading ; while piles of goods, waggons, carts, rigging, anchors, boats,

casks, and government stores, guarded by seamen with cutlasses, and marines with fixed bayonets, met the eye on every hand ; for the North-Sea fleet were moored in the roads. A small corvette, of sixteen guns, was undergoing repairs, and her artillery were placed upon the quay. Near her lay a few small Dutch and French ships, each with the broom, the sign of being for sale, at the foretopmast head. These were prizes, taken at sea. They seemed sad, silent, and deserted, amid the bustle of the harbour.

As we marched past the old Tolbooth of Leith, three fellows, of uncouth aspect, who had been concerned in a robbery, and were chained to the "jouging anchor," were unlocked, and added to our party, as pressed men for his Majesty's navy, for of such material did they make food for gunpowder in those old days "when George the Third was king." This jouging anchor was a ponderous affair ; an appendage of some old frigate, it was a mass of rust, and lay before the town prison. Culprits were chained to it by the ankles, until they were accommodated in the cells, or until the Baron Bailie had time to hear and decide upon their cases.

In 1792, Leith was still destitute of wet docks, and where these are now formed, the sea flowed over an open beach, and dashed its waves against the sloping bastions of an old citadel, built in the time of the great civil war. The London smacks had only been established in the preceding year, and smart craft they were, with enormous fore and aft mainsails, all letters-of-marque ; being furnished by government with six carronades. They carried the old Scottish flag at their foremast head, and fought their way at sea, without guard or convoy.

We were soon thrust into a man-o'-war's boat, and in less than a quarter of an hour found ourselves alongside the tender—a long, low, and black painted cutter, of most piratical appearance, as she had been a French privateer, and

carried a revolving 32-pounder amidships, with a row of brass swivels or patereroes round her stern and quarters.

Lieutenant Cranky, her commander, was a sourvisaged old fellow, of a terrible and buccaneer aspect. He had a queue of coarse grey hair, whipped with common spun-yarn, extending at least three feet down his back, from under a hat shaped liked Napoleon's, and bound with broad yellow braid. He wore a rough pea-jacket, adorned by innumerable brass buttons ; a broad waistbelt of black leather, fastened by a square brass buckle, sustained his heavy cutlass, in the rusty hilt of which he generally inserted his left hand. His right was occupied with a long clay pipe, and he walked to and fro, whiffing away between the stern and capstan, on the head of which stood his invariable companion—a stiff glass of purser's rum-and-water ; and as there was daily a flogging on board, the dozens administered always bore a due proportion to the number of glasses he imbibed. Whenever the hands were piped up for punishment, Lieutenant Cranky stuck in his belt a pair of ship-pistols, the ramrods of which were secured by a lanyard, and thus accoutred, he would scowl over the deck, as if he expected an immediate mutiny and rebellion against him and the king.

He had lost an eye—"his starboard glim," as he styled it—at the capture of Havannah ; his nose had been flattened by a half-spent musket shot in Rodney's battle off Cape St. Vincent ; half his right cheek had been shaved off by a cannon ball somewhere else. His disposition, never a very meek one at any time, had been soured by long disappointment, and exasperated by the tyranny he had borne, and could now exercise in turn ; thus, his whole aspect was not calculated to impress me with pleasure or inspire me with hope on beholding him.

"Boat ahoy," he shouted over the quarter as we sheered alongside ; "what the devil have you got there ? "

"Prisoners, sir, to be handed over to you by the civil authorities," replied Corporal Dhu.

"Been engaged in the riots, eh?"

"Yes, sir," said the corporal, standing erect, and giving Mr. Cranky an old-fashioned salute.

"Bring 'em aboard—all right. We heard some firing yesterday. What the devil was up in that psalmsinging town of yours, eh?"

"The 53rd fired on the mob yesterday."

"Served them right! I would have grapeshot the mutinous spawn! Any killed?"

"A few, sir."

"A good haul for old Beelzebub, eh? Look sharp, youngster, or damme, I'll have you whipped up to the cross-trees!" he thundered in my ear, as I came slowly and reluctantly on board.

I gave him a furious glance.

"Oons, sirrah—what is your name?" he asked, with some surprise that any one under the rank of admiral had the hardihood to look him full in the face; but, as I disdained to reply, he uttered a terrible oath, and added, "boatswain's mate—here with a rope's end! we'll cure you of sullenness, you mutinous young flatfish."

Seeing now the utter folly of resistance, I gave my name, which was duly entered in a book.

"You look deuced like the young swab who clapped on all sail and gave us the slip yesterday. So take care, my lad, or I'll show you the foretop with a vengeance!" said Mr. Cranky, as he gave a receipt for us to Corporal Dhu, together with the fees for the city chamberlain, and then I found myself hopelessly entered as a ship-boy, seaman, prisoner, or what you will, on board of his Majesty's pressing tender, the *Tartar*.

I gazed in agony after the shore boat, as it was pushed off from the side of the cutter, and saw the brick-red coat

of the city guardsmen fading and their figures lessening, as she was pulled into the old harbour.

Lieutenant Cranky, who seemed a thorough officer of the "Captain Oakham" school, eyed us fiercely with his solitary eye.

"Now, my young mudlarks," said he, "I suppose the only kits you have are upon your backs ; but we'll soon have you turned over as powder-monkeys to some line-o'-battle ship ; so console yourselves. Get down below and under hatch, every man and mother's son of you ; and remember that the marines have orders to fire upon any one attempting to escape. If retaken, by ——, I'll flog the hearts out of all of you. Off now, and, d—— my eyes, look out for squalls !"

One of the poor little boys who was with me now began to weep piteously and call on his mother ; so the boatswain's mate thrust us all down below, bellowing out as he did so,—

"Pass a rope's-end here, some o' you ! Now, my young swabs, stow your precious blubbering, or I'll pound you all into jelly. What a rum carawan of a Noah's ark we should have, if we stood such nonsense aboard a king's ship !"



CHAPTER XVI.

THE WHITE-SLAVE SHIP.

I SHALL never forget the emotions of horror and disgust which came over me, on finding myself under the forehatch of this prison-ship, for such it literally was.

About sixty squalid, bloated, drunken, and miserable wretches, whose fierce or pallid visages were visible by the dim light that shone through a species of grated ballast-port,

were huddled together in a space that was too low to admit of their either standing or sitting with ease. The state of the atmosphere was frightful. Our arrival was a signal for every kind of jest and brutality. Our pockets were searched, and not a penny being found on any of us, we were hooted, cursed, and cuffed without mercy. Among this rabble were several seamen, who had been recently captured, and were now intoxicated and furious from the effects of the coarse whiskey supplied at an enormous price by a bumboat woman, whose craft lay close to the grating, and in whose supply of alcohol they sought to drown all sense of care and consciousness ; freely, however, sharing their money and liquor with the thieves and other refuse of society who had been sent on board the tender.

In a corner I sat, crouching down, bewildered and confounded by the stench of tobacco and bilge, of rags and filth, —by the babel of oaths, songs, obscenity, and drunken familiarity, amid which I found myself. Some of them quarrelled and fought, shrieking and blaspheming as they rolled in a heap over each other, and then the sentinel at a grating in the bulkhead only laughed as he surveyed them. —the fiends of this floating pandemonium—and poked at those who came near him with the point of his cutlass.

Giving a wild glance around this horrible and suffocating place, I clasped by hands, and, bursting into tears, exclaimed, again and again,—

“ Oh ! what a disastrous destiny is mine ! ”

Ashamed or afraid lest this most natural emotion might be seen, and subjected to brutal mockery by the unfortunates about me, I crept close to the ballast-port, and fixed my eyes wistfully upon the shore, towards which the ripples of the rising tide ran in long lines of glittering gold. It was about the hour of one in the day. The sun of June shone in all its brilliance amid a clear, blue, cloudless sky. I saw the distant city, with its castle, its spires and lines of

streets rising ridge over ridge upon its seven hills. I saw the green undulations of the beautiful Pentlands, and the far expanse of varied coast that stretched to the eastward, vibrating apparently in the hot sunshine, and mellowing in the warm haze, faint and far away.

I clutched the horrid grating, and shook it, panting for liberty and escape. I saw in the distance a hill and clump of trees that overlooked my mother's cottage. Reflection nearly drove me mad, and the reader may imagine, but I can never depict, how in my soul I abhorred the avaricious hypocrite and the civic tyrant who had hurried me on such a fate.

My mother! the thought of her—of *home*, and where I was, filled me with paroxysms of grief, and rage, and agony; for in boyhood we feel, I think, with greater acuteness than in after years.

After a time, and as the evening came on, amid the horrors of the place, I sat in a state of bewilderment amounting almost to torpor. I doubted the reality of my senses, and kept repeating,—

“It is a dream—I am asleep. When awake, I shall find myself in bed at home.”

From this dream I was, however, soon awakened to a painful sense of reality by a kick or a blow from some of the wretches about me, as they quarrelled and fought with each other.

As night descended a deeper despair came over me; yet I prayed, not to God, but, poor boy that I was, to my mother.

I thought of her alone now, and a thousand acts of kindness and of her maternal love—of my neglect and selfishness—came out of the chaos of my mind, and stood vividly and upbraidingly before me. Even Amy and Lotty were forgotten, or merged in the single idea of *her*—her desolation, her age, and sorrow, and a terror lest I should never see her more. Could I foresee the future!

When the boom of the evening gun from the guardship, pealing with a thousand reverberations over the calm flow of the beautiful river, announced that the sun had gone down beyond the western hills, a hubbub of voices on deck also informed us that the crew of the pressing tender were casting loose the canvas, heaving short on the anchor, and preparing for sea.

As soon as her boats were hoisted in, and the tender was under weigh, the hatch was opened, and we were all ordered on deck from our stifling den, which a party of seamen proceeded at once to swab and deluge with buckets of water. The cutter was standing down the broad estuary of the Forth, but making long tacks, as the wind blew stiffly from the eastward.

I was now doomed to witness a scene which filled me with fresh terrors. A miserable and delicate-looking boy, who had been pressed—illegally kidnapped like myself—proving refractory, by order of Mr. Cranky (an officer of a species happily long since extinct), was tied up to the weather shrouds, and, while screaming piteously, was lashed on the bare back till he was covered, first with livid bars, and then with clotted blood. Ere this he had fainted, but a bucket or two of salt water was dashed over him “to bring him to,” and then he was carried below.

This exemplary exhibition rather tamed the tempers of the pressed men, who gazed blankly into each other's faces, and a few of them became completely sobered by it.

I had great difficulty in repressing an emotion of nausea on witnessing this revolting mode of punishment ; but, plucking up courage, I began to look about me, with the resolution of confronting and grappling with my evil destiny, and of taking means, by fire, water, or bloodshed—I cared not which, for I had grown desperate—of escaping on the first opportunity.

CHAPTER XVII.

JACK THE MARINE.

THERE were no boats towing astern ; all were, as I have said, on board, and at each tack the cutter was generally put about a mile or more distant from the land, on each side of the Firth. Even if I could have dropped from the side unseen, and escaped the fire of small arms that would certainly salute a fugitive from the watch on deck, I doubted my being able to swim so far as the shore. Moreover, I might only be able to make a part of the coast where inaccessible rocks rose sheer from the water. But as the night was coming on, and cloudily too, my heart began to lighten with a hope which was doomed to be crushed, when Mr. Cranky, at nine o'clock, after the night-watch was set, ordered all the pressed men below. He was too old a sailor not to know the tricks they were apt to play under favour of the darkness when a ship was near the shore. So we were all driven down like sheep into a fold. The lower-deck, about the ballast-port, was crowded by the strongest men, who, as the atmosphere of such a place in June was excessively hot, crept close to it, to inhale the freshening breeze that came into the estuary from the German Sea, while I was glad to content me by creeping close to the bulkhead-grating, outside which a sentinel was always posted.

He proved to be a marine, and hearing me moaning and communing with myself till he became tired, he looked through the grating and said, surlily,—

“Silence there, youngster ; we’ve had enough of this nursery nonsense ! All that take on as you do are sure to tumble off the yards in the first puff of wind, or to be

knocked on the head in the first action. It aint lucky, not a bit; so haul in your slack while you can."

"I am sorry I disturb you," said I meekly.

"You seem a better sort of boy," resumed the marine; "far better than the roughs we get aboard this precious tub of a tender," he added, surveying me by the dim light of his horn lantern; "here, taste my flip, will you? it has just come piping hot from the cook's galley."

"Thank you," said I, taking a good draught from the can of hot ale and egg which he handed to me through the grating.

"That is better than a pull at the scuttlebutt, youngster," said he kindly.

"For where is the cutter bound?" I asked.

"Yarmouth Roads."

"Yarmouth?"

"Yes. Some of the North Sea fleet are there in want of hands. You'll soon be turned over to a ship, and in a few weeks may be off the Texel watching the lubberly Dutch."

"Oh, my God! oh, my mother!" I exclaimed.

"What, you have a mother, have you? Well, I had a mother too, once," said the marine thoughtfully. "Now, tell me how you came here, my little man?"

I related my whole story, to which he listened attentively, though I gave it at considerable length. The honest marine seemed much struck with the lawless manner in which I had been treated, and said "it was a d—ned shame that the son of any man who had borne the king's commission should be put upon thus by a canting thief of a lawyer." He added, that he was sorry for me; gave me some more flip, said he would look after me, and that if I wanted "anything at any time, to pass the word forward for Jack Joyce the marine." He then turned away, for the relief approached at that moment with a new sentinel.

I had imbibed a portion of this good fellow's flip in time,

having been so long without food, that I was quite faint ; and amid all my woes, my interior was beginning to cry (as honest Sancho phrases it) "cupboard," in spite of me. Thus, the effect of the hot flip, which was well mixed with a portion of the purser's rum, was to set me into a profound slumber ; and, oblivious of all about me—in spite of the creaking of guns, timbers, and bulk-heads, the grating of blocks and cordage, as the cutter rolled more and more on approaching the river's mouth, I slept heavily on the hard deck—yet not so heavily as to prevent dreams and visions of the happy home from which I had been reft thronging thick and fast upon me.

I heard the voices of my mother and of Lotty. I heard in fancy the sabbath-bell of our little village church, tolling slowly and solemnly in its old and mossgrown spire, echoing along the wooded vale and over the hills of purple heath and yellow broom, as it called to worship those whose hearts (unlike those of the full-fed pharisees and pampered *parvenus* of the city) were earnest, prayerful and humble, like those of their sires of old, who put their broadswords to the grindstone, and when kings and prelates oppressed them, forsook all and went to the mountain side, to watch and pray and fight, and in the end to conquer !

In my sleep, the sound of this bell, which was so much associated with my home, came to my dreaming ear many times, with the murmur of the mountain bee, and the crispy rustle of the old oaks that shaded my widowed mother's cottage—the altar of my hopes and heart, which I never more might see !

With such tantalising visions still before me, I awoke by sunrise, to find the world of water around me, the cutter pretty far out at sea, as she had been in pursuit of a suspicious little craft which had escaped her ; and as the breeze was freshening and now completely aft, she rolled heavily on the foam-flecked waves of the deep-green German Ocean.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OVERBOARD.

THE *Tartar* ran rapidly with the breeze. Her white canvas bellied out before it ; her tall and slender topmast, that tapered away aloft like a fishing-rod, bent as she rolled from side to side ; and all her running gear was blown out in the bend, while far ahead streamed her long red pennant, rippling on the air like a coach whip. The land was seen low at the horizon ; but I knew not what part of the coast we were off.

Jack Joyce shared his breakfast with me, and by his interest I obtained pen, ink, and paper, from the sergeant of marines, to write a letter home. While thus engaged, under the lee of the cutter's revolving gun, with a cask for a desk—writing with aching heart and head, a tremulous hand, and eyes full of tears—I was teased and mocked by the pressed men, who peeped over my shoulder, punched my right elbow, and squirted tobacco juice from their quids upon my paper. This continued for some time, until I lost all patience ; and snatching up a marlinspike, gave one fellow a blow on the head, which rolled him senseless into the starboard scuppers. After this ebullition of wrath, which Jack Joyce warmly commended, I was permitted to finish my letter (Heaven only knows what agony of spirit I poured out in its pages) in peace. I consigned it to the care of Jack Joyce, who faithfully promised to have it transmitted ashore for me.

Postage was not in those days what it is now. Whether Jack ever sent it I cannot tell, as it never reached its destination.

Two or three days passed monotonously away. We kept close in shore, as Mr. Cranky, though not afraid of French

cruisers, was anxious to avoid them, for his small cutter being filled with men like a slaveship, was not in fighting order. We were now off the coast of England, and on the third night saw the light on Flamborough Head sparkling like a star among the darkening waves on our lee bow.

Ages seemed now to have elapsed since I had been torn from my home, while the events of years ago seemed to have occurred but yesterday !

While we were still creeping along the shore, Jack Joyce came to me one evening, about sunset, when we were tacking with a head wind, in dangerous and shoal water.

" Can you swim, Master Ellis ?" he asked, in a whisper, as we leaned over the lee bow together.

" Yes," said I.

" Well ?"

" Like a fish," I replied, confidently.

" That is lucky—for I have a thought in my head."

" What is it ?" I inquired, anxiously.

" You must escape to-night."

" To-night—when—how ?"

" Hush !—yes, to-night, or your chances afterwards won't be worth a piece of spun yarn. We are drawing near Yarmouth, and as there are lots of the North Sea fleet there, the chances are ten to one that all our pressed men and boys will be turned over to the first line-o'-battle-ship that hoists a signal as being short of hands. And once there, there you must remain, as the impressed are *never* allowed to leave the ship ; they might as well be chained to the guns, so you must leave the cutter to-night. Do you see that spark away down to leeward among the waves just now ?"

" Yes," said I breathlessly, as the marine pointed out what really seemed to be a mere spark that was lost and

seen alternately, as the yellow and frothy breakers of the shoal-water rose and fell between it and the cutter.

"That is Sandridge Light. I know it well, and the channel we must pass through. We shall run close in to the light, and put the cutter about when within a quarter of a mile of it. Then is the time to let yourself gently into the water, float till we are some distance off, and then strike out for the lighthouse. I shall be the sentry aft, so don't be afraid if an alarm is given, and I am ordered to *fire* after you. Strike out, I say, boldly and steadily for the lighthouse steps, and God bless you, Master Ellis. When you get home, tell the old woman—I beg pardon—I mean the good lady, your mother, what poor Jack Joyce the marine did for you, and she'll mayhap think of me sometimes of a Sunday."

He withdrew abruptly, lest we might be seen conferring together, and left me to my own anxious and bewildering reflections. My heart beat wildly and my head grew giddy with hope and the anticipation of baffling my captors and tormentors, for I viewed Lieutenant Cranky and the crew of his white slave ship as both.

A haze was fortunately setting over the water—I say fortunately for me, as the long clear twilight of June might have made my projected escape a perilous experiment. This haze rendered the approaching night more dusky, and compelled Mr. Cranky to take sail off the cutter.

His boatswain, a weather-beaten old salt, who knew all the dangerous shoals they were among, as if they were his own patrimony, now took the wheel, and I saw his iron frame planted firmly on the deck, while the red glare of the binnacle-lamps shone on his nut-brown visage, his bearded chin, and bare brawny throat, as he fixed his eyes in succession on the compass, the cutter's sails, the rising light of Sandridge, and a single star that twinkled alternately on each side of the topmast, above the cross-trees.

Close by, stood his crusty commander, wearing a tarpaulin hat and coarse pea-jacket, watching intently the compass-box with his solitary but fiery orb, to see how the cutter headed, and uttering from time to time deep growls of satisfaction, as his old shipmate, with unerring hand, kept her full and steady.

"If this wind holds," said he, "in an hour we shall be past Sandridge Light—it rises fast—and then we shall be out of this infernal shoal-water. What a devil of a bubble it kicks up under the counter!"

In an hour then, thought I, my fate will have been decided; I shall be drowned or free!

So cloudy or hazy had the sky become, that I was not without the most cheering hope of achieving an escape. The waves had become black as ink, though flecked with sandy foam, as they went in long and crested rollers over the shoaly ridges. I could nowhere see the land; but I cared not for that—the beacon light was my guiding star, and the bourne of all my present hopes!

The cutter was running towards it, close hauled on the larboard tack, and I soon made out the beacon to be a huge octagonal edifice of timber, planked, tarred, and pitched, like a ship's side, and placed upon a long ridge of sand, from which it rose on piers of wood and iron, inserted deeply in a submerged rock. I discovered all this by a night-glass, through which the old quartermaster, with wonderful condescension, permitted me to peep for a moment. I then crept away; and after securing a strong line to one of the starboard swivel-guns, coiled up the slack of it, and lay down close by, pretending to be asleep, till the tender altered her course, which was to be my signal for starting.

In about a quarter of an hour—a quarter that seemed like an age to me—I heard Mr. Cranky hoarsely give the orders requisite for putting the *Tartar* about. The wheel was sharply revolved, the gaff topsail flapped heavily, and

still more heavily did the immense boom swing round as it was jibed, and the smart cutter, when her square sail yard was braced sharp up, fell off on the other tack. At that moment, when all was hubbub and noise—bracing and hauling and coiling up ropes—I grasped my line, and slid noiselessly, and feet-foremost, into the sea ! I instantly let go the rope, with a prayer of thankfulness on my lips, as if, in doing so, I was leaving for ever the place of my captivity.

I felt myself borne along with the cutter, and pressed against her side for some seconds ; and it was only by exerting all the strength with which despair induced me that I was enabled, by striking out vigorously, to release myself from this strange influence, by which, in the water, a greater body always attracts the lesser. Then I lay still, floating, and scarcely daring to breathe, as the cutter passed me ; anon I struck out, as Jack Joyce advised, “ boldly and steadily,” for the beacon, the three lights of which cast three long and tremulous lines of radiance over the frothy shoal water that rolled around it.

I had scarcely taken three strokes, when the boatswain’s voice exclaimed, over the cutter’s quarter,—

“ Shorten sail—a boat, a boat—man overboard ! ”

“ Pipe away, the crew of the dingy,” added the quarter-master.

“ A deserter ! ” roared Mr. Cranky, with one of his terrible oaths ; “ come back, you rascally porpus—heave to, or it will prove the worse for you ! Fire, sentry—fire, and send him to Davy Jones or the devil, with an ounce of lead in his skull for ballast ! ”

In terror I looked back, and saw a marine (but not Joyce, who unfortunately had been posted forward), in the act of levelling his musket at me. There was a flash as he fired, and I heard the ball strike the water, from which it sent up a spout near me. With a tact, for which, under all the circumstances, I give myself no small credit, lest another of

these blue pills might follow, I uttered a loud cry as if struck by the shot, and dashed about in the water, as if disabled and sinking.

"There, d—n you, take that whoever you are, and go down to feed the fishes," I heard the old savage Cranky cry, with a triumphant laugh, as the cutter passed slowly and solemnly, like a tall and shadowy spectre, into the gathering mist, and disappeared, leaving nothing astern but her white wake and me.



CHAPTER XIX.

THE SANDRIDGE LIGHT.

STURDILY I swam in the direction in which I had last seen the beacon—I say last, for to one so low in the water as a swimmer, every wave interrupts the vision, and more than once I had to make a kind of leap like a flying fish, to ascertain whether or not I was proceeding in the right course.

I had soon for my guide the triple lines of light which shone from the three lamps of the beacon; and with joy and growing hope I perceived the distance to lessen between us more rapidly than I could have expected. The reason of this was, that the rising tide, and every long roller that chafed and boiled over the ridge of sand on which the beacon stood, impelled me towards it and the shore, which lay about two miles beyond my harbour of refuge.

Nearer and nearer I came! The beacon lights seemed to glare into my eyes with a dazzling radiance; and by the triple gleam they cast upon the tumbling water, I seemed

to be swimming amid a sea of fire, until I got within the dark shadow of the edifice itself, and found myself among the sandy breakers that chafed and boiled against the strong and upright beams which formed its framework and sub-structure—upholding it in the air some fifteen feet above the ocean.

Panting, breathless, half-blinded by spray and salt, I reached the slimy iron steps, which descended from the door into the water, and were covered with seaweed, sharp shells, and clustering barnacles. Twice the recoiling waves, or back-wash, sucked me off, and twice the long rollers threw me forward again, ere I could clutch the lower step of the ladder, up which I swung myself; and then, as if every energy had departed, I sank down on the slimy seat, and for a time closed my eyes, covering them with my wet hands; feeling totally exhausted by the excitement of my sudden flight—the double dangers, by wave and bullet, I had escaped, and the toil and suffering of mind and body I had undergone for so many hours.

I must have sat there at least ten minutes, shuddering with cold, before ascending the ladder or stair to the oak door of the wooden lighthouse. I knocked and shouted again and again with all my little strength, fearing that the rising tide might sweep me off ere those within discovered me! The roar of the white waves that tumbled over the long and dreary ridge of sand drowned my voice; thus some time elapsed before the door, which was secured without and within by ringbolts, blocks, and ropes, like the gunports of a man-of-war, was undone and opened; and I was confronted by two persons, who were dressed like sailors or fishermen, in canvas frocks, long boots, which had never known blacking, red shirts, and red nightcaps; and who, with astonishment expressed in their grim faces, asked me sulkily and simultaneously, “how the devil I came there?”

One rudely held a lantern close to my face, while the

other uncocked and laid aside a pair of long rusty pistols, with which he had armed himself ; as it was not uncommon for lighthouse-keepers to be made prisoners, by the French and Dutch privateers, which prowled about the North Sea in those days. They were coarse and ruffianly in manner, and of most sinister and unprepossessing aspect.

Staggering in, I sank upon the floor, all wet and dripping. Then, while one made fast the door, and coiled the lashings of it round the belaying pins on each side, the other (after carefully investigating my pockets, and muttering an oath on finding them empty) gave me a glass of raw rum, which, though it went down my throat like fire, revived me considerably. Then he assisted me to a seat, upon a sea-chest, after which, I pulled off my wet clothes, and began to feel more collected, and to look about ; while they questioned me with great rapidity, for, probably, their life in the beacon was not one of brilliant adventure, and my sudden visit bore somewhat the aspect of an incident.

"Did you tumble overboard, youngster ?" asked one.

"No," I sighed.

"Were you wrecked anywhere hereabout ?" said the other.

"No."

"Were you blown off shore, in a boat, or marooned on a hencoop, or hove overboard by any one,—eh ?"

"None of these have happened to me," said I faintly, and afraid to tell the truth.

"My eyes and limbs ! did you drop from the moon ? Here, take another pull at the rum-bottle, and wrap this blanket round you ; put on your considering cap, and tell us all about it."

I tasted the rum again, and wrapping about me the coarse blanket, which, though it resembled a Roman toga as a garment, smelt horribly of tar, gréase, and tobacco, proceeded to relate the adventures which had befallen me

of late, dwelling especially upon the lawless manner in which I had been seized by the city guard of Edinburgh, and delivered by the chamberlain to the lieutenant of the pressing-tender. To all this they listened, with their keen eyes fixed upon me, whiffing their long clay pipes the while, and exchanging strange and somewhat sinister glances from time to time.

I knew not what those deep glances portended ; but, in that sequestered beacon, with the mournful gurgling, hissing, and chafing of the waves *under* and around me, my spirit began to sink, and I felt more abandoned by fate than when in the tender, with worthy Jack Joyce, the marine, to comfort and to counsel me. I remembered the examination of my pockets, when half-senseless, and shrewdly suspected I had fallen into bad hands.

When I had concluded, they continued to smoke in ominous silence, and to pass the rum-bottle to and fro between them. At last, one wiped his huge, blubber-like mouth with the back of his brown, hairy hand, and said,—

“ Well, I rather like your giving a tap on the head to that psalm-singing Scotch landshark, lawyer Macfaratsea, or what’s his name ? But it *does* seem to me, somehow, a twister,—a close laid yarn, that of yours, youngster.”

“ How ? ” I asked anxiously, for I was too completely in their power to express indignation at being doubted.

“ Why, as to your being pressed, as you say, by sodgers,” said the other, who was named Dick Knuckleduster (from a dangerous weapon of iron which he frequently wore, and by which, when fitted closely into the clenched hand, a most deadly blow can be given) ; “ we don’t believe a word of it ! You have fairly run,—deserted.”

“ Because I was foully entrapped ! ”

“ Heyday ! don’t go for to abuse the king’s sarvice, my young ’un. I’m an old man-o’-war’s man, and know

Lufftenant Cranky, well. I sarved with him in the *Monmouth* line-o'-battle ship, at the Havannah ; when I was captain of the mizen-top, and know that, thof a little too ready with a curse or the cat, a better hoficer never drew a cutlass or slung his hammock under a beam."

"I care nothing for all this," said I ; "I hate coercion, and was never intended for a seafaring life."

"Hate !" growled the fellow, with a hoarse laugh ; "split me, Dick, did you ever hear the like o' that ? He'd like to be in a clean-going channel frigate, where the helm is always put down when the captain wants fresh butter from shore ; or, mayhap, in the King's Majesty's yacht ; which, as everybody knows, never sails o' nights, but always anchors at sunset, in nice quiet places, like millponds. My precious greenhorn, it will be quite against our conscience, in this sharp war, to let the king lose such a valuable sarvant as you."

"Conscience !" I reiterated.

It was a great word with Macfarisee, and when using it their cruel banter made my blood run cold.

Too weak to remonstrate with them, I reclined upon the chest and closed my eyes. I thought of my mother, of Lotty and Amy, and strove to pray ; but memory refused to supply me even with the most commonplace formula. However, by feigning sleep, I was relieved from the conversation of those two ruffians (they seemed no better) in whose society my malicious destiny had cast me.

"He's asleep, I think," said one, who was named Broken-nosed Bill, puffing a whiff under my nose.

I snored in corroboration thereof.

"Sound, sound as a timber-head," added Dick.

"You know what shares *is* at sea ?" asked Bill in a low voice.

"I should think so ! I warnt six years a privateersman among the Antilles for nought."

"And shares in a lighthouse, eh, Dick?"

"Yes; split me! aint it at sea as well as a ship?"

"Then we understand one another. We'll hoist a signal and hand him over to the first king's-pennant that passes her, as *run* from the service, and we'll share the bringing-money between us, parting it fairly on the capstan-head, eh?"

"Besides, on *conscience*, you know, we can swear he fled from a king's ship."

"He'll get a tight flogging, anyhow."

"That's his business, eh, Bill?"

I remembered the poor little boy whom I had seen so cruelly mangled on board the tender, and my heart sank within me.

"We must keep a bright look-out, that this young gudgeon don't take a swim for it, and give us the slip as he did old Cranky."

"A swim! why, split me, if the great sea sarpent could swim through the shoals and shifting sands from here to Compton Rennel!"

"Well, he came to us uninvited, like a mermaid, and blow me if we won't have what he is worth out of him! Does the young whelp think we are to keep him in grub and grog, on nothing a day or midshipman's half-pay? No, no; Dick, give a look at the glims, and then we'll turn in for the night. The wind is rising; we'll have a tough squall before morning, and who knows but the devil may send something ashore upon the Ridge by that time; there were two craft in the offing at sunset."

The reader may imagine my dismay on finding that I had escaped from Scylla only to fall into Charybdis; but nature was now completely exhausted, and ere long I sank into a sleep, so deep as to be undisturbed either by dreams or by the booming of the surf as it boiled and broke over the long waste of sand on which the beacon stood.

CHAPTER XX.

DICK KNUCKLEDUSTER.

WAKENED by rolling off the sea-chest, on which I had fallen asleep overnight, I found that day had broken—that it was considerably advanced indeed, by the appearance of the light, and for a minute I could scarcely realize my locality or that I was not in a dream.

Alone in the lower story of a lighthouse, against the timbers and *below* the floor of which I heard the sea gurgling and washing with ceaseless and monotonous sound ; the apartment was octagonal : built like the sides of a ship, caulked and pitched, with enormous beams of oak bolted together by cramps and knees of iron. The furniture and appurtenances consisted of two sea-chests, two campstools, seated with old canvas ; a few pistols, cutlasses, spy-glasses, and signal-flags, stowed away among salt beef, biscuits, combs, razors, butter, plates, pots, and pans on the dirty shelves, which were bracketed within the sloping timbers. Besides these, were various casks, and odds and ends, the salt-encrusted state of which indicated their having been found in vessels stranded among the adjacent sands.

I ascended a ladder which led to the upper story. It contained two truckle beds, which, being formed of teased oakum and tarry shakings, emitted a frightful odour, and thereon were my worthy hosts in profound slumber. I resolved to turn to account the brief liberty this gave me, and commenced an immediate inspection of the place. A ladder and hatch led me from this place to the roof, where I found the lights extinguished, and, from a slender iron gallery formed round the summit, I had a view of the dreary sea boiling over ridges of sand, that were dry or

covered alternately, as the tide ebbed and flowed. The shore was visible, but so flat as to seem far off, though only a mile or so distant. The sky was grey and lowering—the sea a dingy russet green, flecked with foam and full of shifting sands. The blackened ribs of an old wreck, half-buried in sand and covered by sea-weeds, lay near, and thereon was perched a solitary gull with grey and drooping wings.

The only other feature in this cheerless scene was one of those old square church towers peculiar to England. It seemed dim and distant in the haze ; but indicated the locality of a township or parish, and in that quarter now all my hopes were centred.

The lighthouse was evidently without a boat, the two occupants being apparently men who could not be trusted with one. Provisions and other necessities were brought off to them, from time to time, by certain officials on shore.

My spirit writhed and my heart sank at the prospect of residing with such wretches, even for a week ; and I had, moreover, the miserable conviction, that neither my life nor liberty were safe with them, after the conversation I had overheard. On that day, and the next, they were alternately sullen and sneering, while, telescope in hand, from their upper gallery they kept a sharp look-out for a king's ship.

So did I, but with very different feelings.

Finding the double necessity of killing the dreary and anxious hours, and perhaps of conciliating—if such were possible—these sullen and brutal spirits, I assisted them in trimming the huge lamps and reflectors, in cooking our repast of salt junk, and brewing a great can of egg-flip ; but having been detected, in the evening, waving my handkerchief as a signal to a passing schooner, the master of which, on seeing it, actually altered his course and bore up for the lighthouse, I fell into a serious scrape.

Suddenly I was confronted by my two tyrants. Dick's eyes glared like those of a wild beast, as he gave me a violent blow on the ear with a heavy telescope, while the other, with gratuitous ferocity, struck me down by a stroke from a handspike, exclaiming,—

“Look out! or, split me, if I won't cut your rascally throat from clue to earing! Who the devil is going to keep a loblolly-boy like you in grub and grog for nothing?”

I fell senseless and bleeding on the upper deck, or roof of the lighthouse.

I must have lain long thus; for, on recovery, I found that darkness had set in, that the beacon was lighted, and its three lamps, from the cavity of their vast reflectors, were again shedding their radiated lustre far across the heaving waves of the darkened sea. There was no moon visible, but a few tremulous stars were shimmering through the gauze-like vapour that veiled the gloomy sky.

Stiff, sore, and chilled, with an aching head and eyes full of tears—my cheeks damp and my hair encrusted by the saline nature of the atmosphere—I staggered up and sat in the outer gallery for a time, gazing sadly, and full of bitter thoughts, upon the restless sea, which boiled and seethed some thirty feet below me.

CHAPTER XXI.

RETRIBUTION.

SMARTING still with the blows those ruffians had given me, I thought of all the evil fortune had wrought me, and burned for vengeance ; and terribly I had it, ere the morning sun rose from the sea.

The sound of a strange voice—a woman's voice, too !—was now heard. A woman in that sequestered lighthouse ! From whence, and how had she come ? I heard also the ribald fun and coarse laughter of the two beacon-keepers. Slipping off my shoes, I crept down the ladder, and peeping through the hatch in the ceiling of the lower apartment, saw the Messieurs Dick Knuckleduster and Broken-nosed Bill seated near a table, drinking and smoking with a woman of repulsive aspect, but with whom they seemed on somewhat intimate terms.

Sinewy, bony, and gaunt, she had the hooked-nose, large keen black eyes, and thick animal mouth of a Jewess of the lowest class. She seemed to be about forty years of age, and was clad in a dirty cap, over which a red handkerchief was tied ; a sailor's pea-jacket enveloped the upper part of her person, a short red linsey-wolsey skirt shrouded the lower ; while her large feet, which in size bore a due proportion to her dingy, clumsy hands, were encased in a pair of old military boots. Her visage, which was as yellow as an old drumhead, was seamed by a hundred dirty wrinkles ; and her mouth had certain hirsute appendages, of a hue so dark as to render her sex almost doubtful, and her aspect diabolical. She wore large gold ear-rings, and had in her mouth a short black pipe, which was only removed to make

way for a battered tin mug, from which she was imbibing gin-and-water, hot.

By the number of bottles upon the table, she seemed to have brought to the beacon an ample supply of alcohol under cloud of night ; and, from the tenor of the conversation that was in progress, I gathered that this fair daughter of Judah was not an unfrequent visitor.

My attention was next attracted by several jewels and trinkets which the worthy officials of this Pharos were offering her for sale. She seemed a bumboat woman, or slopseller, such as one may find keeping a shop of the humblest class in the meaner alleys of a seaport town ; and they addressed her by the euphonious name of "Mother Snatchblock."

"This gold watch and ring ain't worth much," said she ; "but where did they come from ?"

"The sea," growled Bill.

"The sea is mighty productive hereabout ; did they bite your jiggerhook, when fishing ?"

"They came in the usual way, Mother Snatchblock ; so, if you must know, we had 'em from a gentleman, *as* escaped from the wreck of the Dutch galley that foundered in the last gale on the tail of the bank."

"Did he swim from there to the Sandridge ?"

"Ay—every fathom of the way ; in a rough, wild sea, too, to the steps of the beacon."

"A strong fellow he must have been !"

"Strong—damn him ! I should think so. Look at the knock on the head he gave me, when I took his dainty ring from him," said Bill, exhibiting an ugly and half-healed gash, which his red knitted cap had hitherto concealed.

"The ring was't worth it, Bill, my boy."

"Come now, old woman—don't cry stinking fish ; the stone is a valuable stone."

"A bit of green glass."

"A real emerald, if I know aught about it."

"Which you don't," said the Jewess, placing the ring, which was of great beauty, on the tip of one of her thick dirty fingers; "but you should have waited till the gent was asleep, and *then*——"

"Then—what?"

She passed a finger significantly across her throat, a motion at which the ruffian laughed, and the other said,—

"Sleep—confound his bones, he sleeps sound enough now, lashed to an old kedge anchor. Do you see the round hole in the timber there?"

"Yes."

"The ball we sent through his brains lodged *there*; but pass the bottle o'stingo over here, and let us say no more about it; for sometimes I think he rises out o' the water o' nights, with the anchor on his back, and knocks at the door—and faith, I shall quit this place when I can!"

The reader may imagine the horror and repugnance with which I listened to these terrible details of the inner life of the inhabitants of this solitary beacon. After they had drunk and smoked for a time, during which the woman gave them all the shore gossip, squared accounts to their satisfaction, and concealed the jewellery and trinkets about her person, she said,—

"And now about this boy that you have on board—I mean above stairs?"

"Well, and wot about him?" asked Bill surlily.

"Did'n't we cotch the young varmint making signals to a foreign schooner?" added Knuckleduster, with a sonorous expletive.

"How did you know her to be foreign?" asked Mother Snatchblock.

"By the swabs that hung over her side, and the lubberly way she lay to and then hauled her wind again, when filling her foreyard and standing off. She nearly lost her rudder

on the shoal, so that youngster's signal might have cost her dear if the wind had freshened."

"You've been feeding this young biscuit-nibbler too well," said the kind Mrs. Snatchblock; "starve him, Bill—for starvation is the best tamer I know of."

"Now that you speak out, I think we shall."

"And a little starving, or saving, its the same thing, will increase the profit o' wot we makes on him, by giving him up to government, so pass the bottle of Old Tom over 'for a last pull.'"

"I'm blessed if it is ever out of your hand, Mother Snatchblock."

"I means the water mug."

"You've had so much of both, old woman, that you don't know one from tother; fire away, if you will—take the stuff stark naked—but if you get one more sheet in the wind, you'll find it troublesome work to fetch the cove of Compton Rennel to-night in that punt of yours."

"For this young powder-monkey as will be," resumed this hideous and now half-tipsy woman, "we shall get about one pound one, from the lufftenant of the press-gang at Compton Rennel, and we must go shares in that."

"Shares, in course, mother—but what! only one pound one, when the bounty is so high, and the North Sea fleet on the pint o' starting for the Texel?"

"Only a guinea, I tell you," responded the Jewess doggedly, with an oath; "if I arrange all about them jewels, you may well chuck this boy—what's his name——"

"Holliver Hellis," said Broken-nosed Bill.

"Into the bargain."

"Well, be it so," said the ruffians together.

"Now for another whiff, and then for the shore," said Mother Snatchblock, buttoning up her pea-jacket, and tightening the scarlet bandanna under her chin.

A sudden thought—a wild hope of escape now seized me.

This woman must have come off to us in some way. Could this have been by the schooner I had signalled? That was unlikely by the remarks I had heard—besides, she spoke of leaving *immediately*.

I put my shoes in my pocket, slipped softly up to the gallery again, and looking round, saw a little punt moored to the steps of the beacon, and tossing like a cockle-shell on the rollers that came in succession over the ridge, about thirty feet below me.

“What shall I do?” I asked myself; “wait till she has pushed off—then leap into the sea and swim after her, in the hope of moving her sympathy?”

The revelations I had just heard, and the character of the wretch, alike forbade the hope of such a result; so my resolution was taken at once.

A lightening rod, which ascended from the water to the roof of the lighthouse, was close by me, and bolted securely to its side by iron cramps. I grasped it, swung myself over, and aided alike by my agility, by hope, and rage, at all I had undergone, I came down hand over hand with ease, my feet being firmly planted at every step, on the planked, and sloping side of the edifice.

On beginning my descent, I observed that one of the beacon lamps had been carelessly trimmed, and hung over to one side, by which the flame already reached the wood-work, and had set the joists *on fire*. To repair this neglect was still in my power; but to reascend might cost me liberty—perhaps life. My bones were yet aching from the brutality I had endured.

“Bah!” said I, “let them swim if they can,” and continued my descent.

Easily reaching the steps, I sprang into the punt—untied the painter, mechanically, and with the celerity of one in a dream, pushed off vigorously from the accursed spot.

“Thank God! thank God!” I exclaimed, with a hurrah

of joy, and shipping a pair of sculls that were lashed to the thwart, rowed away, I cared not in what direction, so that I placed the deep blue water between myself and the beacon, the door of which at that moment opened, and its two inmates appeared on the slimy iron steps, lighting down their fair visitor by means of a horn lantern.

The tipsy Jewess uttered an imprecation on discovering that her boat was gone ; but I was only eight or ten yards from the beacon, and the broad glare of its triple lights, each blazing within a huge round reflector, shone full upon me.

I uttered a loud and exulting laugh. They saw me in an instant, and all shouted at once a volley of hoarse oaths, and orders "to come back," with threats of being shot if I disobeyed. But I laughed louder still, and pulled more vigorously away, quitting the line of light, however, lest they might actually put their threat in execution.

While the baffled Jewess screamed, stamped herself into a frenzy at the door of the beacon, the two men disappeared and hurried up stairs, I doubted not, to procure a couple of government muskets which they possessed, for the purpose of having a shot at me from the upper gallery ; but the flames, which I saw already filling all the second story of the building, must have barred their way, for I soon saw them again at the door gesticulating violently, while their dark figures were strongly defined in black outline against the red and lurid light within.

But still I shouted exultingly, and pulled breathlessly away.

A strong odour of burning wood was soon wafted over the water, for the whole beacon was built of timber, which was old, dry, and being yearly pitched and painted, it burned with all the fierce rapidity of an ignited tar-barrel. Within, the entire edifice seemed filled with light and flame, like the cone of a furnace ; suddenly there was a crash, as the red-hot machinery, with all its wheels, lamps, reflectors, and iron-

work, vanished with the descending roof, and a pyramid of red and roaring fire shot upward into the dark midnight sky, diffusing a light in every direction, even to the far horizon of the German Sea, and all along the low flat shore. Every wave that broke above the desolate Sandridge, as it raised its crested head, seemed for the moment a wave of fire, for the whole sea became, as it were, a sheet of reflected flame.

This sudden spectacle and terrible catastrophe arrested my exertions ; for a few minutes I gazed in wonder and bewilderment. Then moved by pity, I put the punt about, and, animated by an emotion of generosity, of which the objects were totally unworthy, sculled with all my strength towards the spot, to aid the three wretches who merited so little at my hands.

The iron gallery and the slender lightning-rod were distinctly visible against the dark sky, for both were glowing and red-hot ; but the former fell, hissing into the sea, and the latter, after waving to and fro, bent over, willow-like, in the form of a slender arch, above the flames, which, as there was not a breath of wind, and the night was exceedingly calm, roared steadily upward, and with a terrible sound. The beacon was soon reduced to a mere skeleton, amid the charred timbers of which, the flames began to sink and die ; thus, in less than half-an-hour, not a vestige of it remained, save the scorched heads of the wooden piles which had upheld it above the sea.

As the latter again became dark, and I heard no sounds but the lonely booming of the surf and the beating of my own heart, shudderingly I put the boat about, and pulled shoreward in the direction of a little red spark that seemed to indicate a habitation ; and seeking the while to avoid the numerous boats which (now that the beacon was fairly burned down) put off rapidly, with all their crews, intent on rendering assistance when too late.

I had now no feeling either of vengeance or of anger at the three miserable creatures who must have perished in the wooden beacon ; and, though in no way to blame for the dreadful catastrophe, their hideous visages seemed to pursue me as I pulled towards the shore, which rose rapidly as I approached it. I beached the punt upon a shelving slope of sand, and sprang ashore with a shout of joy, although alike ignorant of where I was or what might next befall me.

The night was warm and the air was balmy, for it came from fields of ripening corn. I sought the shelter of a coppice that grew close to the sandy beach, and stretching my limbs at full length on the long thick grass, in my danger and solitude, there made many good and wise mental resolutions, now, when far, far from my mother's once happy home, never to say or do aught of which she could not approve, to remember all her instructions and precepts, and her love for me, as a restraint from the paths of temptation and vice. In these good resolutions I found a consolation in my loneliness, sorrow, and remorse, and so, after a time, I fell into a disturbed and uneasy sleep.



CHAPTER XXII.

COMPTON RENNEL.

WHEN I awoke, the pleasant rustle of the green foliage above me and the bright gleams of sunlight that flashed through the waving branches, with the songs of the birds that twittered from hedge to tree, excited a momentary astonishment ; but the booming of the adjacent sea, as it rolled on the shelving beach, recalled all the adventures of

the last night, and the complete desolation of my position. I clambered up a sloping bank, and for a time lay there under the shady chesnut-trees, gazing on the sunlit sea, and idly listening to the long rolling billows that broke in white foam and in endless succession on the sandy shore, abandoning myself "to the supreme happiness of doing nothing ;" but soon came bitter reflections, and with them the necessity for action.

Seaward I saw a long white line of foam. That was the *Sandridge* ; a few black stumps appeared above its snowy line. These were the piles whereon the beacon had stood. I shuddered and turned away, resolving to be wary of whom I trusted now, for already I had been (as they say in Australia) twice bound and free within a week—bound by the aggression of others, and free by my own energy.

As I proceeded and quitted the coppice for a highway that lay between thick green hedgerows, the influence of the beautiful morning and the fertility of the scenery raised my spirit. I was in a strange place, true—and without a penny ; yet, boylike, the joyous novelty of perfect freedom—the memory of dangers dared and escaped (for *I might have been left* to perish amid the flames of the beacon), made me thankful and lighthearted, as I walked towards the red-brick English town, on the old grey Norman church tower of which the morning sun shone merrily.

Passing one or two manor-houses of quaint aspect, with oriel windows and clustered chimnies, that stood in lawns as flat and green as a billiard table ; and by the wayside, a few rustic cottages, buried under arbours of honeysuckle and woodbine, a road that was so thickly arched over by oak, chesnut and plum trees in full foliage, as to resemble a leafy tunnel, brought me to the town, among the red-brick and square modern houses of which were many gable-ended, galleried and quaint old mansions of the Elizabethan age.

I paused at the head of the principal street, for I felt myself without friends, and what was still worse, without money. The morning seemed early, for few persons were yet abroad, and the almost grassy vista of the street, which was paved with little round pebbles, was silent and empty. Close by me were the parish stocks, and thereon I sat for a time to reflect on my loneliness. A man passed me, a bumpkin going afield. He had a pitchfork on his shoulder, and his face expressed that well-fed air of content which is as peculiar to England as his little round hat, his canvass frock, and hobnailed shoes.

"Good morning, measter," said he, passing thoughtlessly on.

"What town is this?" I asked.

"Where be you come from, not to ha' heerd o' Compton Rennel afore, eh? The best market town in any o' the Ridings o' Yorkshire," he replied, and passed on, singing merrily.

"Yorkshire!" I reiterated, while the name of the town caused an emotion of alarm. I remembered the press-gang, of which Mother Snatchblock and Dick Knuckleduster had spoken. I was afraid of being questioned as a stranger, and of being in some way implicated in the destruction of the lighthouse; or, by my involuntary residence therein, being deemed a comrade of those whose conversation and dealings proved them to be murderers and wreckers.

While these and many other unpleasant thoughts occurred to me, a large placard, surmounted by the royal arms and running somewhat in the following terms, caught my eye:—

"ALL GENTLEMEN VOLUNTEERS!"

"That are willing to serve His Gracious Majesty King George III., in the Royal Scots Fusiliers, now commanded by Major-General the Honourable James Murray, of Elibank,

lately Governor of Quebec, may apply to Sergeant Drumbirrel, at the Chequers, or the 'Maid and the Magpie,' in Compton Rennel, as twenty brave fellows are wanted to complete the strength of the battalion, which is about to sail for the West Indies, to fight the rascally French, Dutch, and Spaniards, and lick them right out of the world.

"Every gentleman enlisting shall receive pay at once, with two guineas to drink the very good healths of His Gracious Majesty and the noble General Murray, of Elibank, —not forgetting the Earl of Kildonan, Lieutenant-Colonel of the said regiment.

"God save the King! Hurrah!

"DUNCAN DRUMBIRREL, Sergt., R.S.F."

My heart beat lightly as I read this rather grandiloquent document. The Fusiliers were my father's old regiment—"the regiment," *par excellence*, of Lotty and me, and an emotion of joy came over me. Then, as if to supplement this invitation to glory, pipeclay, and gunpowder, I heard the sound of drums and fifes in the town. Anon a crowd of hobnailed rustics and other people appeared debouching into the main street, and amid them I saw the tall black bearskin caps and white feathers, the long streaming ribbons, the drawn swords and red coats of the recruiting party.

Then I felt that I was not without friends in Compton Rennel, and pressing forward, I joined the gaping crowd. I was weary, hungry, and harassed; but the stirring sound of the sharply-braced drums and the notes of the shrill fife filled my heart with a new glow of joy and energy. I elbowed a passage to the sergeant, who, with his pike on his shoulder, erect and stiff as its shaft, marched at the head of his party, which consisted only of an Irish corporal, a private, two drums and fifes, and eight or ten cockaded recruits, straight to the "Maid and the Magpie,"

in front of which, after beating the *Point of War*, all took off their caps and gave three cheers for the king and the gallant General Murray.

Wistfully I gazed at the seven soldiers in their red coats, faced with blue,—once so familiar to my boyish eyes ; but they seemed “new hands ;” at least, I failed to recognize them. Amid the hubbub about the inn door, I seized the arm of the halberdier, and inquired,—

“Are you Sergeant Drumbirrel ?”

“Yes, my lad. What do you want with me ?”

“To volunteer,” said I.

“For the Twenty-first Foot ?”

“Yes.”

“All right, boy. What age are you ?”

“Seventeen years.”

“We don’t reckon our time in the army by years, but by the enjoyments we have,” replied Drumbirrel, who was quite master of the noble art of trepanning. “In his Majesty’s name,” he added, slipping the mystical coin into my hand ; “and now, come into the bar for our morning glass, and to pass you under the standard.”

And thus it was that I became a Royal Fusilier !

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE "MAID AND THE MAGPIE."

I WAS immediately placed upright against the sergeant's pike, on the shaft of which were accurately notched the number of feet and inches which formed the standard height for recruits in his Majesty's Twenty First Foot. Though considerably below the required gage, as a growing lad, I passed the ordeal, and ere mid-day, with a few other aspirants for fame and Chelsea, was duly attested by a jolly, red-faced rector, who was a J. P. in that Riding of Yorkshire. Two guineas of bounty were then paid to me, and in the evening, with the sergeant, Corporal Mahoney, the drummers, &c., and a few more recruits, I found myself enthroned on a table at the "Maid and the Magpie," spending my newly-acquired pieces of gold with singular facility; and more likely to become a bibber than a Hannibal, as I strove to drown care and extract recklessness from brandy and tobacco.

A crowd of bumpkins and idlers filled the large wainscotted smoking-room of the old-fashioned inn, which Sergeant Drumbirrel had made his head-quarters; and as red-coats were seldom seen in the rural district of Compton Rennel, our redoubtable halberdier, who had all the *bon-homme*, acuteness, and confidence requisite for a complete recruiting sergeant, found himself acknowledged king of the company. He was a tall and handsome fellow, about forty years of age; his hair was already becoming grey, and his face lined by years of hard drinking and hard service in America and the tropics; and his staple subjects for conversation were his personal exploits in the fields of Mars and Venus,—stories in which he usually stood prominently

forward,—thus : how, by following *his* friendly hints, Burgoyne beat the French on the banks of the Hudson ; and how on another occasion he bilked an innkeeper at Chatham ; for he deemed one exploit quite as worthy of consideration as the other.

He knew all the tricks of the recruiting service ; enabled recruits to pass the standard by false scalps and glued cork heels, and made no secret of his art before his auditors. While he imbibed and expressed a hearty contempt for all civilians ; he deemed it quite as much his duty to trepan as to enlist them ; thus, by his own account, he had brought many gallant fellows into his Majesty's service by deluding them into an exchange of clothes with him, taking care to leave a *shilling* in one of the pockets ; on the discovery of which, he desired the wearer to keep it in the king's name, and marched him straight to the nearest J. P. for attestation. He had freely proffered commissions, enlisting many as captains, colonels, and knights of the Bath and Garter ; he had slipped "the shilling" into a bumpkin's pocket, or into his hand when shaking it, and then sworn in a whole vocabulary of oaths that it was given in the name of his Majesty.

From time to time, the health of the latter was drunk at my expense, with great vociferation and loyalty, the sergeant sitting the while at the head of a long bare table, armed with a huge Toby-tossopot jug (formed like a little squat man in boots, with a three-cocked hat, each angle of which was a mouth-piece) ; it was full of ruddy, foaming ale,—Yorkshire home-brewed.

"Are you wise," I whispered, "to let out all the secrets of your art before these fellows ?"

"Wise, lad ?" said he, "I never was wise, and 'tis too late to learn wisdom now ; besides, what is the use of being wise ? 'Tis better far to be jolly."

"But those who overhear you——"

"May go and be hanged," said he ; "our beating order expires to-night, and to-morrow we march for Hull to join the regiment, and I don't care how soon we embark ; for I begin to tire alike of barrack life, recruiting, and garrison duty."

"Hurrah ! the sooner we embark the better," said I, with a shout ; for now the fumes of liquor, tobacco, and the general odour of the room itself, were overpowering, while the noise, confusion, singing, quarrelling, and the voices of women lamenting the enlistment of sons, brothers, and lovers, made up a Babel, from which I could not escape, as Sergeant Drumbirrel was too old a soldier to trust a recruit for an instant out of his sight, until he was duly "turned over" to the staff at head-quarters.

"Oh, stay at home, my dear—dear son," exclaimed a poor old woman imploringly to a tipsy rustic, whose wide-awake hat was adorned by the tricoloured streamers of the gallant 21st ; "stay at home with your old mother, who loves you so well, and do not go to the sodgering, leaving her to starvation and grief."

Though applied to another, these words sank deeply and bitterly into my own heart ; but it was too late to retreat now. The bumpkin to whom she spoke tore off his gay cockade, and began to weep like a huge tipsy boy as he was.

"Here, you young devil, take a pull of this," said the sergeant, proffering his foaming jug. "Mother of Moses ! wait, old lady, till you see your son in his red coat and captain's *epaulettes*. The first duke that has any live stock in the shape of scampering daughters will have him to dinner directly. Hurrah for the old 21st ! Keep up your hearts, my boys, for here are the sinews of war !"

With these words he refreshed us all, by displaying a handful of guineas, which, however, were not his own, but the marching money of the whole party. This timely dis-

play silenced the regrets of all, save one young fellow, upon whose shoulder a very pretty girl hung, and wept bitterly.

"Is this your sweetheart?" asked the sergeant, whose rubicund visage expressed a curious combination of commiseration and disgust.

"Yes," replied the recruit angrily, for he now viewed our commander as his tempter and enemy.

"Well, our colonel does not approve of married men on foreign service, so you may as well transfer her to some one else."

"Tony—my dear Tony!" sobbed the girl.

"So you're in love, my girl," continued the sergeant; "get out of it as soon as you can, for your Tony is a fusilier now, and love rarely survives a change of quarters. I have done a little in the love-making way myself, and speak from experience."

"Love, like destiny, should be fixed, unchanging," said I, enthusiastically, as I thought of poor little Amy Lee.

"Desthiny," reiterated Mahony, our Irish corporal; "and what the divil's that?"

"Our fate in life."

"I've known what *fate* were on the line o' march in Flanders, when my boots pinched—is it that ye mane?"

"Fate," said Drumbirrel, ponderingly—don't know much about it. I know that every bullet has its billet—a saying we have in the army—and it comes pretty much to the same thing. But be jolly, youngsters, and you may all come in time to the *halbert*," he added, with a wink which made all the soldiers laugh, as his speech contained an allusion known to them alone.

"Thunder and blazes!" exclaimed Corporal Mahony "here is that unbelieving fifer ating mate on a Friday, like a heretical Protestant."

"Well, there's no fast to the *poteen*—glory be to God!"

replied the fifer, who was his countryman ; “ so fire away, my boys, till the butt-end of the morning.”

“ Silence all ! ” commanded the sergeant, who seemed literally to live on tobacco-smoke and brandy-and-water ; “ silence for a song, or I’ll knock the dominoes out of your jaws with my halbert—and, drummer, brace up, for an accompaniment.”

With these words he struck up a rollicking barrack-room ditty of the day, in the prolonged “ Tol-de-rol-lol ” of which the whole party joined, and the drum was added, so that the din, with the clattering of jugs on the table, and iron heels on the floor, was tremendous.

Behold poor Will, just come from drill,
’Twas only last night I enlisted ;
I sold my cart to pay the smart,
But money King George resisted !
I know not what my fate may be,
Yet think it mighty odd, sirs,
That a lad so trim and smart as me
Should be in the awkward squad, sirs !
Tol de rol, lol, lol, &c.

Perhaps a recruit may chance to shoot
The great citizen Bonaparte, sirs—

Our halberdier, who had become considerably the worse of his potations, here became inarticulate ; and would have fallen off his chair, but was recovered by Corporal Mahony (a prompt doctor on such occasions), who, in five minutes, sobered him by pouring down his throat a little tea, dashed with strong vinegar.

The society among which I was thrown sickened, and the drunken uproar almost deafened, me ; thus I gladly retired to my pallet, in a miserable garret, which was allotted to the corporal and myself. Drumbirrel, having discovered, through the medium of his brandy-and-water, that the blowsy landlady was absolutely beautiful, lingered behind.

Overcome by the effects of his recent orgie, Mahoney soon dropped asleep, and I was left to my own thoughts.

So I was to be a soldier, after all ! It seemed the immutable dictum of fate—of a destiny against which there was no contending ; and by this almost atheistical sophistry (rather than by the pressing argument of necessity) I endeavoured for a time to stifle regret, and the stings of a conscience that upbraided me, for deserting my mother in her old age and my sister in her early youth.

But the die was cast, and thus I strove to find consolation in deeming myself a fatalist.

I knew that my mother would weep for me—yea, bitterly ; and that how dear my desertion (the whole circumstances of which I might never be able to explain) cost her, would be known only to God and her own gentle heart ; and this conviction sank like iron into my soul.

Our quiet little cottage—the peaceful village home I might never see again, came vividly before me. With a swollen heart, and eyes full of bitter tears, I thought I never loved them all so dearly as on the night of that day, the most eventful of my life.

I never closed an eye, and when our drum beat before dawn, in the echoing market-place of Compton Rennel, I started unrefreshed from my tear-wetted pillow, and prepared to march, with other recruits, for the head-quarters of the Scots Fusiliers.

CHAPTER XXIV

SERGEANT DRUMBIRREL.

THE regiment which I had joined was entirely composed of Scotsmen, with a very few exceptions, being one of the old national corps which had existed before the union of the countries ; but, as twenty men were required to complete the strength before embarkation, the lieutenant-colonel, the Earl of Kildonan, had obtained a beating-order, and sent out parties from his head-quarters, to obtain recruits in England, and hence my meeting with Sergeant Drumbirrel in the little market town of Compton Rennel.

The regiment had been raised in 1678, by Charles, fifth Earl of Mar, for the service of Charles II. ; it was then armed with light muskets, and hence the name of *Fusiliers*, which it still retains, even in these our days of breechloaders, Whitworth and Lancaster rifles. Its first baptism in blood was at the battle of Bothwellbrig, and after serving in all the useless and wanton wars of Orange William, of Queen Anne, down to the campaigns of Marlborough, Peterborough, and Cornwallis, it was now about to commence a new career of glory, under Sir Charles Grey, in the conquest of the West Indian Isles.

As we marched along the dusty highway, all this was told me by Sergeant Drumbirrel, who, with all his recruiting tricks, was a droll and intelligent fellow from Ayrshire ; and a veritable record of all the past history of the Scots Fusiliers, which, with the true *esprit de corps* of a British soldier, he declared and believed to be the *first* regiment in the civilized world.

An irritated father having followed us, with the intention of giving a farewell horse-whipping to his son, who had

enlisted, overtook our party, when halted at the first wayside inn, about ten miles from Compton Rennel ; but our halberdier was ready for any emergency, being a man of endless resource. To save the youth's bacon, he tied him up in a sack, and placed him among twenty others, which were filled with potatoes, in a room, into which the astonished farmer had traced his son, without being able to discover him ; and this trifling incident furnished the party with a subject for merriment and jokes, until we reached our halting-place for the night. The lad's name was Tom Telfer, of whom, more anon.

Perceiving that I was very much cast down in spirit, and also that I kept somewhat aloof from my companions, Sergeant Drumbirrel pressed me to drink.

" You made me take too much last night," said I, reproachfully.

" Too much ! why, we drank the best of brandy, so that is impossible."

" My mother——"

" Come ! don't be a Molly and quote your mother, now when you are a soldier ; but what did *she* say ?"

I sighed bitterly and replied,—

" She ever taught me that liquor was an enemy."

" Then you should do as I do."

" How is that ?"

" Make it a *friend*. Here, boy, the smallest drop in life won't do you the least harm ; a hair of the dog—you know the rest."

Thus urged, I took a draught of brandy-and-water from the sergeant's canteen, and thereafter became considerably invigorated and more communicative.

" Did you know Captain Ellis, of the Fusiliers," I asked.

" Ellis—Ellis, who served with Burgoyne, and was killed on the banks of the Hudson ?"

" Yes."

"Know him—odd's life, lad, and that I did! A kind good friend he was to me, and saved me once from the halberts, when found asleep on my post on a cold and wintry American night. A better officer or a braver one never wore a red coat! I was by his side when the death-shot struck him, and I was one of those who buried him at the foot of a tree before we retired, and just as night was coming on, for we all loved the captain too well to leave him without a soldier's grave. Was he a relation of yours, my lad?"

Touched by what the sergeant said in his blunt honest way, my eyes filled with tears, and I replied,—

"I am his only son."

"You!"

"I."

"You, little Oliver, whom I carried on my back on the march to Skenesborough, when the baggage-waggons broke down and were lost in the woods!" exclaimed the sergeant, grasping both my hands with friendly warmth; "well, well, what queer things do come about in this world! You have grown so much, I could never have known you; and ten years in America and Jamaica have made some change in *me*. I have no need for hair powder *now*, Master Oliver; time is powdering me fast enough. You must tell me how this came to pass; and the good lady your mother——"

"I have been most ungrateful in leaving her; though the act was somewhat involuntary."

"Too late to think of that now. Your health again, Master Oliver. I hope to see you a captain yet, like your father (as to *me*, I've got to the top of my profession). You will find your name a password to every heart in the Fusileers."

The sergeant took a long draught from his canteen and resumed,—

"In the hard winter of '75, when Quebec was besieged by the Yankees, we suffered horribly, though *I told* the

general how it would be. It made one melancholy to see the poor, pale, wasted soldiers full of spirit, though their canteens and haversacks were empty, patient though suffering, sick at heart in soul and body, wolf-eyed by famine, toil, and battle, standing on their dreary posts, at Quebec, among the frozen snow, through which the bare skeletons of men and horses were everywhere visible. One night I must have died of cold (for my watchcoat was frozen like a deal board, and the flesh of my fingers stuck to the barrel of my firelock), but for your father, Master Oliver. He gave me his blanket to wrap round me, and shared with me the contents of a canteen, as I to-day am proud to do with you. God bless him, he had the heart to feel for a poor comrade. I remember the storming of Skenesborough, when he got that ugly knock on the head. We were in brigade with the old '9th and 20th.' I volunteered for the forlorn hope; for being a bit of a devil, I always went for anything desperate; and I remember, as if 'twere yesterday, the night of the 5th of July and the preparations, we stormers made for the event of the next day."

"Preparations—you would be reading your Bibles, I suppose?" said I simply.

"Bibles!" reiterated the sergeant, bursting into a loud fit of laughter.

"How, then, did you prepare?"

"By changing every rag we possessed into ready money at the sutler's tent—by eating and drinking and fun; for if we survived, a dead man's kit would always come handy, and if we were knocked on the head, what the devil was the use of letting ours come to the drumhead, or be buried in the trenches with us? So a jolly night we had of it, cleaning our firelocks, snapping the flints, drinking and singing,

'Why, soldiers, why
Should we be melancholy boys,
Whose business 'tis to die?'

Well, at three o'clock in the morning of the 6th, we landed—formed in the water, and rushing up the mountain, assailed the stockades, while the general, by my advice—for, as I said before, General Burgoyne always took *my* advice—sent the 20th in rear of the fort to cut off the retreat of the Yankees; but they all escaped save a few prisoners. My eyes, Master Oliver, I remember well the first time the good captain and I were under fire together. It was on that 8th of July, when we were detached towards Fort Ann to support His Majesty's 9th foot, which was attacked by hordes of Yankees, French, and wild Indians, who are worse than incarnate fiends. A terrible march we had of it, cutting down trees to clear a way where men never trod before; fording weedy creeks, and floundering through reedy marshes in heavy marching order, with knapsacks and blankets, campkettles, and sixty rounds per man, till the 30th of July, when we crossed the Hudson by a bridge of boats. And there it was that General Sir John Burgoyne came galloping up to me and said,—

“‘Duncan, what do you think of the position of these rascally Yankees?’

“‘Send forward the 20th and the 62nd, general,’ said I, ‘and if they fail, the 21st will be sure to settle the business.’

“‘You’re right, sergeant—you always *are* right.’

“‘Thank you kindly, general,’ said I, saluting him, for I was always very respectful. So on went the old Kingsleys, as we always called the 20th, and next the 62nd; but deuce a thing they did but blaze away their powder and lose their men in heaps, till we—that is, the Fusiliers, Master Oliver—came up, shoulder to shoulder in line, with colours flying, and the drums and fifes playing ‘Britons, Strike Home!’ and *home* we did strike with the charged bayonet; for, as Sir John says in his despatch (though ungrateful enough, never to mention *me*), ‘just as night closed

in, the enemy gave ground on all sides, and left us completely masters of the field.'"

The sergeant and I became sworn comrades ; we had now a thousand things to talk of. He was kind, attentive, consolatory, and said everything he could think of to fire my energy and keep my spirit up. Under his influence, it rose superior to the thoughts that had crushed it ; and I now resolved to become, if possible, the arbiter of my own destiny, agreeing with Musæus, that "an *active* man is not content with being what he is ; but strives to *become* what he *can be*."

CHAPTER XXV

HEAD-QUARTERS.

WE joined the head-quarters of the regiment, then lying in the barracks of Kingston-upon-Hull, and after being inspected and approved of, by our lieutenant-colonel—the Earl of Kildonan—a fine young soldier, who had served throughout the two campaigns of the War of Independence in America, I was "turned over," as the phrase is, to Captain Glendonwyn's company, by Mr. Rolster, the adjutant, and forthwith commenced my initiation into the mysteries of the goose-step and other calisthenic exercises. I was passed rapidly from squad to squad. Though my heart, yet, was far away at home, my spirit went with the task that was set me ; thus I was soon declared fit for duty and was put on guard.

The strictness with which I conformed to every rule soon attracted the attention of my captain and of the staff. I interfered with none, and even the most officious corporal

could not discover a military fault in me. I soon ceased to be deemed a "new-come," or stigmatized as a "Johnnyraw." I was often too generous with my pittance of pay, for being unsuspicious, the artful fleeced me of it, and thus I was often obliged to "box Harry" till pay-day came; but as I was always on good terms with the pretty young English-woman (a sergeant's wife), who messed me, I did not find this so difficult as other spendthrifts, who were older, less favoured by nature, or less suave than I; for my gentler breeding made me a favourite with all the women in the barrack.

I remember my first guard well, for there was a grim incident connected with it.

When I was on sentry at the mainguard-gate, about the hour of five, on a cold, raw, misty morning, two of our officers passed quietly out. They were muffled in their blue regimental cloaks, and seemed pale, like men who had been all night awake. They were excited too—though somewhat silent. In a few minutes *other two*, accompanied by Dr. Splints, our assistant-surgeon, also passed out; and then I surmised that their expedition was nothing less than a hostile meeting, for such affairs were of every-day occurrence in those hot times of high punctilio, and when in every corps there were a few firebrands and fighting men, who made themselves the arbiters of every petty quarrel, and urged that blood alone could wipe out the most trivial or imaginary slight.

I was not wrong in my supposition. Being a young soldier, I was pondering whether or not I should call the officer of the guard, when I heard two shots fired simultaneously in a field not far from the barracks; and in a few minutes, a terrified rustic came hurriedly to the gate for a stretcher, on which two files of the guard, soon after, bore in one of the four officers whom I had seen pass out—a fine young lad, the lieutenant of our light company—who

was shot through the lungs and dying ; and this mournful tragedy was the sequel to the mere boyish joke of corking a pair of mustaches on the lip of another, as he lay on the mess-room chairs asleep overnight.

The officers were soon likely to have more of this sharp work cut out for them ; for Lieutenant Rowland Haystone, of ours, a mere youth, having dined at the mess of a hussar corps, they conveyed him, well dosed with champagne, into the riding-school, and there carefully covering him up to the nose in sawdust, left him, tucked in thus, to his slumbers, which were undisturbed till the roughrider came with his horses and squad about seven next morning. The non-commissioned officer, astonished to see a man's face among the sawdust and bark, dragged out our unfortunate subaltern, who had some difficulty in comprehending where he was ; and he was brought home to his quarters in such a plight, that he had a narrow escape from losing his commission. To square accounts, he shot one of the hussars ; but, as the affair was considered an insult to the whole regiment, the dragoons and fusiliers fought whenever they met in the streets and taverns, for some time after this, and Mr. Haystone actually tabled at mess a proposal for calling out the whole of the hussar officers by turns ; but they were despatched to join the Duke of York's unfortunate army in Flanders, and so ended this feud and its follies.

Soon after this, I was detailed for a very unpleasant duty.

A number of men being required for the West India fleet, under Admiral Jervis, there came a secret order for the press-gangs to visit the docks and crimping-houses at Hull ; and on the night selected by the authorities, fifty men of the fusiliers, provided each with twenty rounds of ball-cartridge, were paraded, about ten o'clock, under the command of Lieutenant Haystone and Ensign Bruce, and marched with great secrecy towards the principal dock, the

gates of which were by that time closed. We were in light-marching order, with our forage-caps and great-coats.

At the gate, we were joined by fifty carefully-selected seamen, all armed with cutlasses and pistols, and wearing short flushing jackets. Among them, as I afterwards heard, were a number of the oldest midshipmen, and the whole body was officered by second and third lieutenants. They had already with them a few pressed men, whom they had picked up at the grog-shops and ale-houses, as they came along the quay, and these were easily discernible by their hands being fettered and their sullen air.

Mr. Haystone now gave the commands to prime and load with ball, and to fix bayonets ; and on the gates being opened, he took possession of the pressed men, and sent guards, under sergeants or corporals, to keep the various avenues, with orders to defend them at the point of the bayonet against all who might attempt to escape or resist ; for such was the aversion to the naval service, even at this time, when Nelson's pennant was streaming from the *Victory*, that press-gangs frequently met with the most desperate resistance : and at Hull, in those days, there lived near the docks a certain enterprising son of the Emerald Isle, who kept a large depôt of cudgels, and lent them out, at "a penny a row," to all who required them.

All was still and dark in the docks, and I could see the forest of masts and rigging standing in intricate masses against the cloudy sky, which, fortunately for our expedition, was moonless, and the month was October.

Dividing into numerous small parties, the press-gang boarded several large ships ; and from the quay we could see the flashing of cutlass blades, and the gleam of lanterns on the masts above and the slimy water below, and on the pale and excited faces of the crews, as they were turned up from their hammocks, and their skippers forced to account for all their men, per list. Their papers were cursorily

examined, and the best men selected for service. On the slightest resistance they were handcuffed, at the point of the cutlass and the muzzle of the levelled pistol.

While posted as sentinel inside one of the gates, I saw a fugitive seaman, who had dropped on the quay from the spritsail yard of a large bark, run towards the barrier, and heedless of my command to "fall back," he proceeded at once, and with desperate activity, to climb up by the cross-bars of the gate, for the purpose of escaping.

Remembering all I had endured on board the *Tartar*, I pitied the poor fellow; but my orders were imperative; moreover, the eye of a sergeant was upon me.

"Come back, sirrah!" I exclaimed, cocking my musket; "come back, or I shall be compelled to shoot you."

"Shoot away, then," he replied, and still continued to climb.

I know not how I might have acted had not his foot slipped when near the summit, and he fell heavily to the ground. Powerful and active, he sprang up at once, and boldly confronted me as I charged my bayonet; and perceiving that his intention was evidently to close with me and wrest away my musket, I said, resolutely,—

"Stand!—stir not one step, or I shall shoot you down, in the king's name!"

"Curse the king, and every slave who serves him!" he exclaimed, with an oath, which, however dreadful, seemed not unfamiliar to me; and, on drawing nearer, I recognized the mean and sinister visage of Dick Knuckleduster, whom I had last seen in the burning beacon.

"You were one of the keepers of the Sandbridge lighthouse?" said I, with some satisfaction; for, to tell the truth, the catastrophe of the beacon sometimes haunted me unpleasantly. He scowled at me under his shaggy eyebrows, and did not reply.

"Answer!" said I, threatening him with my bayonet.

"Well—what if I was?"

"You know that it was burned down?"

"Ay—pretty well," he growled, with a laugh and an imprecation.

"How did you escape?"

"By the water."

"Of course—but by what other means?"

"I swam."

"And Bill with the broken nose?"

"Was roasted like a crab, and like a buttered crab I heard him sputtering on the burning beams above me—ugh!—d—n me—burned alive!"

"And the wretched Jewess?"

"Mother Snatchblock?"

"Yes."

"Ha! ha! burned too; but who the devil are you, that you know all this?" he added, savagely, while coming forward.

"Back—back!" I exclaimed, "or I shall run my bayonet into you; I am Oliver Ellis, the boy whom you would have sold to the press-gang—do you hear me, rascal?—to the press-gang, to whom I shall surrender you in five minutes as a prisoner. Time about is fair play, Mr. Dick Knuckleduster."

For a few seconds the fellow was silent; and while our eyes glared into each other, we could hear the bustle on board the ships,—the breaking open of hatches,—voices calling the rolls of crews,—the scuffles, oaths, and plunging overboard of those who sought to escape the gang by swimming to the quays, where they were captured by the guards of fusiliers under Mr. Haystone. In muscular strength I was but a child, when compared to a ruffian so brawny as Knuckleduster; but my position as sentinel, and my loaded musket, gave me a power of life and death over him. He felt this; his features contracted with intense

ferocity, and I could see his sinister eyes glaring like those of a polecat in the dark.

"What—here's our powder-monkey that bolted become a full-blown lobster!" he exclaimed, with an affected laugh; "but you'll shake hands, won't you, Oliver?"

"Back!" I replied, keeping my charged bayonet at his breast; "back, for my finger is on the trigger."

"You will let me past, won't you?"

"Not an inch."

"I was very kind to you in that ere beacon, I was," said the fellow, in a whining voice; "Bill wanted to shy you into the water one night, to save your grog and biscuits; but I thought it better——"

"To sell me——"

"To whom?"

"The press-gang, through Mother Snatchblock's respectable agency, eh?—sell me like the emerald ring and jewels of the unfortunate man, who was wrecked near the beacon, whom you foully murdered, and whose body you sunk with an old kedge-anchor, eh?—Knuckleduster, the wrecker, thief, and murderer!"

He uttered a growl like a bulldog, and literally writhed with fear and baffled rage as I said this.

"You have no proof for what you say, and I defy you," replied he; "but this I know, that I shall seize *you* as a deserter—a boy run from His Majesty's ship *Tartar*, and all your denials, or jawing fore and aft, won't be worth a soldier's button. Besides, how do I know that you didn't burn that ere beacon, as well as steal Mother Snatchblock's boat, and so become guilty of murder as well as robbery? Oh! I see jolly well you'll think better of it than let me be taken to-night. A fine joke it would be, indeed, for Dick Knuckleduster to be beaten at this time o' day by a sucking-turkey like you!"

"Silence, dog, or I shall certainly bayonet you. I am no

longer the friendless boy you thought me, but one of the Royal Fusiliers, and I defy alike your falsehoods and your malevolence."

The fellow again resorted to the most abject entreaties that I would permit him to escape ; but I stood resolutely then, pinning him against the wall, until Mr. Stanley, a midshipman of the *Adder* frigate, approached with a party of seamen, and pressed him into his Majesty's sea service. Then, as they dragged him away, he poured forth a torrent of imprecations upon me, mingled with threats of future vengeance, which I heeded less than the chafing of the slimy water upon the green and barnacled sides of the quay. At all this the midshipman and the sailors only laughed, saying they had "a boatswain, who would teach him better manners, on board the *Adder*."

However, this was not the *last* I was fated to see of Master Richard Knuckleduster.



CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ROUTE.

THE time was approaching now, when my comrades and I would have "to go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear and with manly hearts ;" for orders came from the Horse Guards that the regiment should be held in readiness for foreign service in a tropical climate. The depôt was formed ; kits were carefully inspected and reduced. The officers provided themselves with those suits of white jean or linen, which our more limited means denied the poor rank and file ; but our lieutenant-colonel, the Earl

of Kildonan (who had returned to Scotland to be married), was generous as he was brave and noble, and from his own purse supplied the regiment with many necessary articles of comfort which the niggard government we served withheld. He gave to every man a white canvas frock, or fatigue dress, for boardship, with a pint of port on the day the route came, to drink the health of his young countess, which we all did, with three cheers, in the barrack-yard of Kingston-upon-Hull, and with joyous hearts ; for a little kindness goes a long way in the army, and no men's regard is more easily won than that of soldiers.

I write from experience, for I know them *well*. Every soldier has a comrade, who brings his dinner when on duty, or attends to his little wants when sick, for all these kind offices are reciprocal ; and it was my good fortune to find one, than whom no better or braver fellow ever wore the scarlet and blue of the old fusiliers. This was honest Tom Telfer, the same runaway lad whom Sergeant Drumbirrel had concealed in the sack near Compton Rennel, and who fell to my lot at Hull, under rather chivalrous circumstances, though he was deemed a very raw recruit, and as such was ordered to remain with the dépôt.

When the order to prepare for foreign service came, it stated that only two married women would be permitted to go for every hundred men ; and as we had many wives in the fusiliers, the balloting caused serious anxiety in the barrack. That it might be fairly and justly conducted in our company, old Captain Glendonwyn, who had spent the best years of a long life in the regiment, and was loved by us all, attended in person. Tickets in proportion to the number of married women were put into Sergeant Drumbirrel's bearskin cap. Two of these were marked " to go," the rest were blanks. It was a heart-rending scene to witness the pale and trembling women put in their hands, and lingeringly draw forth the paper, which, when unfolded, made them perhaps

shriek and cast themselves on their husband's breast. Poor old Captain Glendonwyn said and did all that was possible to console the disappointed and afflicted ; but all proved fruitless. One woman, a drunken and worthless character, detested by the whole company, uttered a loud and coarse hurrah, adding,—

“ Luck and ould Ireland for ever ! ”

She was Mahoney's wife, who had drawn a prize “ to go,” and all present exchanged glances of disappointment ; for “ Mother Mahoney,” as we named her, could very well have been spared.

The next who advanced was a poor young English girl, a lance-corporal's wife, in a few weeks to become a mother.

Thrice she put in her trembling hand, while her eyes were closed, and her teeth clenched. I looked at her husband. Pale as death, the poor fellow was watching her with nervous anxiety.

“ Take courage, my bairn,” said Glendonwyn, who always spoke Scotch, patting her kindly on the shoulder.

“ Oh, sir, I need it sorely,” said she.

The fatal paper was drawn forth, but she had not the courage to open it ; neither had her husband.

The captain gently took it from her hand and opened it. The old man's kindly features fell. He gave her a glance full of commiseration, and shook his white head sorrowfully.

“ My puir lassie ! ” said he.

“ I am not to go ? ” she asked in a breathless voice.

“ God comfort you, bairn ; corporal, look to your wife,” he added hastily, as she sank back into the arms of the soldiers who crowded round her.

On recovering, she begged and implored her husband, hysterically and in moving terms, not to leave her, and her yet unborn babe ; but he—a soldier and under orders—what had he to urge—what promise could he make, for he was not a free man ? This scene was singularly painful, for

the young corporal and his little English wife were respected by all the company. While Captain Glendonwyn was endeavouring to console them, one of those incidents ensued, which, I rejoice to say, are not of unfrequent occurrence in the service. Tom Telfer stepped forward, and saluting the captain said,—

“Please, sir, because I was an awkward fellow, they detained me for the dépôt ; but if you could get the corporal turned over to it, I’ll gladly volunteer, for his wife’s sake, to go in his place.”

“Thanks, my brave lad,” said the old captain, clapping him on the shoulder ; “you are a credit to the regiment—I will never forget you.”

“Bless you, Tom Telfer—bless you—bless you !” cried the young wife, throwing her arms round his neck and kissing him on both cheeks in a transport of gratitude, while her husband wrung his hand, and the soldiers gave him three cheers.

The balloting was again resumed, and the other prizes “to go,” fell, as usual in such cases, to the lot of the worthless and careless, too many of whom followed our corps in those days.

Tom was transferred to the service companies, and I confess to conceiving a great predilection for him, from the day the balloting took place.

Next morning, an hour before daybreak, when a dull and wetting mist was floating on the Humber, enveloping the town, with its spires and docks, its quays and shipping, we paraded in heavy marching order, with knapsacks packed, our blankets, canteens, and havresacks hung about us, and fell into our ranks, one thousand strong, for embarkation. The muster-rolls were called by lantern light ; but day broke before the gates were flung open, and by that time the parade-ground was crowded by soldiers of other corps, who assembled to give us a farewell cheer, for we were bound

on distant and arduous service in the West India Isles, when the republican principles, which in this and the preceding year had deluged France with blood, were fast extending, and where the Blacks and inhabitants of colour had risen in arms against the Europeans, who now sought from Great Britain that protection which the mother-country, plunged in civil war and anarchy, was unable to afford them ; but our mission was also one of capture and conquest, in the fertile and beautiful Antilles.

The handsome young Earl of Kildonan, our leader, looked somewhat sad and pale on this morning ; for, as we heard, he had been recently married in Scotland, where he was leaving behind a young and beautiful wife, who, however, as he told us in his harangue, was to follow us and join him, when we had captured the West India Isles from the French, and made there a quiet home for a time.

The bayonets were fixed, and with a thousand bright musket barrels, were glittering gaily in the morning light. The colours were uncased—the blue colours of the Old Fusileers, with the Thistle and Saint Andrew embroidered on his cross ; and now the band struck up “The Girl I left behind Me,” as we wheeled from line into sections, and the loud hearty cheer that rang along the departing column was responded to by all the spectators. On this eventful morning, I remember how the first *flam* of the leading drum made my heart leap ; I felt that I was now a soldier in earnest !

“Cheer again, my lads,” cried old Captain Glendonwyn, brandishing his sword ; “there is nothing in this world like a hearty British cheer. All the Frenchmen in Europe could never make anything like it.”

Amid the enthusiasm kindled in the eyes and hearts of all, by the aspect of the fusileers with their long lines of tall black bearskin caps and glittering bayonets, on the march to a far and foreign land of war, disease and danger,

were many episodes of a sorrowful kind. On all sides were poor fellows seen taking farewell—a last farewell it proved to many—of their wives and scarcely-conscious little ones ; and many a man started from the ranks to give one more kiss to the pale cheek he might never press again, or to the ruddy mouths of their children ; and then waving his hand with a backward glance, strode manfully and mournfully on, with his shouldered musket.

“ God bless you, Mary dear ! ” said one.

“ Good-bye, Elsie, my love ; be carefu’ o’ the bairns till we a’ come back again.”

“ Oh, when will that be, Archy ? ”

“ God only kens—I dinna.”

“ Kiss Robin and the wee pet every night for my sake ; pray for me often when I am far awa’ frae you and hame, Betsy, my bonnie doo ! ”

“ Hurrah for the King and the old Twenty-first ! A shilling a day is mighty fine pay ! ” shouted Corporal Mahoney.

“ Happy the man to-day who has no other wife than old Brown Bess,” I heard the earl say to Captain Glendonwyn.

Such were the scraps of conversation I heard on all sides, amid the sobs and loud lamentations of women, who bore or led their little ones by the hand, and strove to keep pace with the sections in which their husbands marched, the officers kindly permitting them to change place with the outer files, that husband and wife—parent and child—might keep together, hand-in-hand, till the last fatal moment of separation. As we neared the harbour and marched along the quay of the old dock, which occupies the site of the ancient walls and ramparts, and enters immediately from the river Hull, the sailors in all the merchant shipping swarmed up into the rigging to give us a parting cheer, and amid such sounds, and the song sung by the mass of our light-hearted fellows, the sorrow of those who were on the eve of separa-

tion, perhaps for ever, was swept away or forgotten by the beholders ; and still with breathing brass and clashing cymbal, "ear-piercing fife and spirit-stirring drum," our band accompanied the sonorous chant of nearly three hundred voices :—

The dames of France are fair and free,
And Flemish lips are willing ;
And soft the maids of Italy,
And Spanish eyes are thrilling :
Still though I bask beneath their smile,
Their charms must fail to bind me,
For my heart flies back to Britain's isle,
And the girl I left behind me!

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE "ADDER" FRIGATE.

WE were to form part of an armament which consisted of three line-of-battle ships, six frigates, and several transports, under the command of Admiral Sir John Jervis, having on board a body of troops of the line and artillery, under General Sir Charles Grey, K.B., afterwards created Viscount Howick, Earl Grey, and who was father of the great political reformer and statesman. Our express orders were to attack and capture the French West Indian Islands, considerable information regarding the military details of which had been furnished to our government by Madame de Rouvigny, a fugitive Royalist, who resided under the protection of the British flag at Barbadoes.

The head-quarters of the fusiliers were on board the *Adder*, a large double-banked frigate, and when stepping on

her deck, the first person who met me face to face was my former terror and *bête noir*, Mr. Cranky, who was now promoted to this command, in reward for the vigour with which he had exerted himself when on board the *Tartar*. He was superintending the embarkation of the troops, whom he surveyed with no very pleasant expression of face, and at whom he swore roundly as they arrived in boat-loads ; for to a sublime contempt for landsmen in general, Captain Cranky united a species of indescribable disgust for soldiers in particular ; thus he would as soon have received any number of obnoxious vermin on board his frigate as the head-quarter division of his Majesty's Scots Fusiliers.

On board this fleet were the 8th, or King's Regiment ; the 9th, 33rd, 38th, 43rd Light Infantry ; 44th, 70th, or Surrey ; and other corps, led by officers, many of whom were to attain titles and distinctions in the following wars of the Peninsula and Flanders. As we were proceeding on service in time of war, we had all our full allowance of ammunition ; but each man was restricted to ten rounds, the reserve being lodged in the ship's magazine.

As we were bound for a warm climate, large tubs were fixed in the forecastle for our men to bathe in, and when these could not be used, they drenched each other by buckets of salt water. This, if it promoted health and cleanliness, often produced quarrels and rough practical joking, and was, at times, particularly unpleasant ; but such compulsory ablutions are enjoined by the rules of the service. At eight every morning the hammocks were brought on deck and triced in the nettings.

We sailed about the latter end of January, the admiral having sent a frigate ahead to bring off some transports and storeships that waited for us at Plymouth. We encountered adverse winds, and nearly a fortnight elapsed ere the frigate appeared, with St. George's cross flying at her maintopmast-head, upon which, the ships destined for the expedition

weighed and stood under canvas, out of the sound. On this day the *Spitfire*, sloop-of-war, joined us, with her colours half-hoisted. Her commander, James Cooke, son of the celebrated navigator, had been drowned, with his coxswain and seven seamen, by the oversetting of his boat. It is remarkable that his second brother perished in the *Thunderer*, 74, when she foundered in a storm, and that his two sisters were married to naval officers, both of whom were drowned.

I well remember the horrors of sea-sickness in the Bay of Biscay, when we encountered an adverse gale.

The whole squadron were signalled as being in sight when we reached latitude 49°40'; and then we bore away for Barbadoes. The ships kept as near each other as was consistent with safety; thus scarcely a day elapsed without a friendly cheer being exchanged between the *Adder* and other vessels of the fleet; and twice we were within a pistol-shot of the *Spitfire*, which bore the left wing of our regiment.

As we got into warmer latitudes, the sentinels, who at sea mount guard with their bayonets only, were strictly enjoined to prevent men from sleeping on deck, as it is productive of fever, moon-blindness and other ailments; and twice in each week we had fumigations of common salt, oxide of manganese, sulphuric acid, and water, placed in basins or pipkins of hot sand between decks. I have to apologize for troubling the reader with details, perhaps, so trivial; but such were new to me then, and served to lighten the tedium of a long voyage in a crowded frigate.

One night the wind blew hard, while torrents of rain fell. In the obscurity we could neither see the lantern of the admiral's ship, nor hear the guns she fired. Once I thought a faint gleam lighted the darkness far away to leeward; but my observation was treated as valueless by the sailors, because it came from a red coat. On this night

I was sentinel before the poop, and the disastrous incident that occurred impressed the memory of it upon me.

The atmosphere was so thick that Captain Cranky, who, with all his coarseness and tyranny, was an able and skilful seaman, ordered the watches to be doubled, a light to be shown at the foremast truck, and one at each end of the spritsail yard, while a constant look-out was kept ahead, lest we might run foul of some of our own transports. The wind increased so much, that the sails were reduced ; but still the *Adder*, a sharply-built frigate, was flying fast through the water, which swept past her on each side like a millrace, curling in white foam under her counter, and bubbling far away in the waste of darkness and obscurity astern.

Still the gale increased, and now the spray flew in showers across our deck. The huge lanterns swung madly to and fro at their perches, casting many a wavering gleam on the tall and spectral outline of the frigate's canvas, and on her wetted rigging. The ports were all closed ; more sail was taken off the ship, and then the deadlights were battened in.

Suddenly a cry came from the watch forward.

"A sail—ho !"

"Where ? cried the officer in command of the deck.

"Right ahead, sir."

Ere another word could be said, there was a shock—a yell as if from the bosom of the sea, and with a mighty crash we were upon her !

I sprang upon the poop, and saw ahead, two tottering masts sink like phantoms under our lee bow, and in another instant, the wreck of a brig we had cleft in two, was swept past me, and sank astern. I saw a few miserable men, half naked, or just as they had sprung from bed, clinging to the tophammer, while the crushed and shattered hull went down into the trough of the midnight sea, and from

its dark and horrid valley, their cries of death and despair rose mournfully to the lofty poop, from whence I surveyed them.

All this was but the vision of a moment, for the howling blast which hurried us on, swept the wreck, and the poor wretches who floated about it, alike out of sight and hearing.

"Lay the foreyard to the wind—officer of the watch ! 'Sdeath where is the officer of the watch ?" bellowed Captain Cranky, through his trumpet, as he rushed on deck ; "pipe away the cutter—over with the life-buoys—up with more lanterns !"

The *Adder* was under such way, that some time elapsed before she could be put about ; but as boats could not be lowered in such a sea, Cranky was obliged to content himself with firing guns, and burning blue lights, amid the haze and gusty wind of that gloomy and mournful night.

We hovered about the place for an hour : but all was silent, save the voice of the wind, which howled through the rigging, and tore the foamy crests off the billows as they rose above the line of the sea. Of that doomed ship, we saw and heard no more.

The next day dawned clear and beautiful ; but the sea was swept by glasses in vain for a trace of the wreck. Indeed we were then far from the scene of the catastrophe, which was the source of much ill-feeling between Captain Cranky, and the Earl of Kildonan, the former asserting that "but for the blundering stupidity of some of his blubberly Scotsmen, who formed part of the fore-castle watch, and failed to keep a proper look-out, the collision would never have occurred."

The Earl, who was proud, fiery, and high-spirited, resented the overbearing manner, the coarseness and tyranny of Captain Cranky ; thus bitter words ensued between

them—so bitter that we were certain a duel would follow as soon as we came in sight of land anywhere.

Cranky ordered two of our men to be flogged, as he would have done seamen, on his own authority. The Earl insisted that, as soldiers, they should first be tried by a court martial. Upon this, the captain stuck his old battered cocked hat (the hue of which had long since become brick red by exposure to the brine) fiercely over his solitary eye, and while it glared like that of a cobra capello, he folded his arms, and spluttered out,—

"D—n my eyes and limbs, my lord, or whatever you call yourself, do you or I command this ship?"

"Sir," replied the Earl loftily, and with a disdainful smile; "the rules of the service say, that when troops are on board of ship, the entire command will be vested in the senior officer; whatever branch of the service he may belong to, he is equally bound to exercise that command, and is responsible for any breach of discipline that may occur."

"So, sir, a King's ship might come to be commanded by a puppy of a hussar or lancer, eh?"

"It might be so," said Kildonan, laughing.

The very idea of this, made Cranky almost choke with spleen; he thundered out a terrible oath, and swore he would lash every Fusileer who was on deck that night; for when soldiers are on board ship, they are divided into three watches, one of which, with a subaltern officer, must be constantly on deck, to assist in keeping a look-out, and to work the running rigging. This proposal to flog about one hundred-and-fifty men made the Earl laugh aloud; but he added gravely,—

"Beware, sir, for this language and bearing cannot be tolerated. If you proceed thus, I shall be forced to take strong measures, and at the point of the bayonet, make a signal to the nearest ship of the fleet; beware, sir, I am

Henry, Earl of Kildonan, and Lieutenant-Colonel of the Scots Fusileers."

"Signal—a signal from *my* ship and without *my* orders?" exclaimed Cranky, absolutely livid and dancing with rage; "I'll let you know, sirrah, a lousy Scots lord, thof you be, that I value your title and your laced coat at about as much as they are worth. Beat to quarters," he added, with the voice of a stentor, while rushing into his cabin, from whence he returned with a couple of swords; "beat to quarters and man the main-deck guns!"

It was now the young Earl's turn to change colour, and he glanced anxiously at Glendonwyn, Colepepper, Haystone, and several of his officers, who drew near him. By this time the drum had beaten, the whole of the fusileers were on deck, and seemed only to be waiting for orders to rush below, and snatch their muskets from the cleats, as a conflict seemed impending between them and the crew of the *Adder*, who, though by no means devoted to their furious commander, repaired to their stations with doubt, irresolution, and sullenness, expressed in all their faces; for, although these men were ready to oppose any foe, muzzle to muzzle, they were by no means inclined to grapple with their own countrymen, to gratify the fury of a half-tipsy tyrant.

Cranky now ordered every officer and man down to the guns on the main deck, and requested the Earl to send the Fusileers below.

Lord Kildonan complied, and in a moment not a man was left on the poop deck save two seamen at the wheel, and the sentinel. I had the good fortune to be the latter.

"Choose one of these swords, sir," said Cranky, "and stand on your defence. I'll teach you, lord and earl thof ye be, that I command this ship."

Kildonan took one of the swords, on which Cranky instantly unsheathed the other, crying,—

"On guard, on guard, or whiz? damme. I am through you."

"Captain Cranky," said the Earl, with stern dignity; "I would beg of you to remember that I am, probably, a much better swordsman than you, having had the misfortune to be some years a prisoner of war in France, where, having a good *maître d'armes*, I had little else to occupy my leisure hours, than the use of the small sword ——"

"What the devil is all this to me?" asked Cranky.

"Simply this, sir; that if you are determined to fight, I will meet you with pistols on shore, when we shall be on more equal terms."

"You Scotch swab of a lord; you—you are a lubberly coward and dare not fight. 'Sblood, I'll have you carried to the main deck and drenched with buckets of bilge water—I will; or towed over-board at the end of a line; on guard—on guard," he added, making a vicious thrust.

The Earl grew deadly pale.

"Fellow," said he, "you must be either mad or drunk to address in such terms one who is a peer of the realm, and Colonel in his Majesty's service."

He now stood on the defensive with his sword, which he evidently used with great skill, though the manner in which Cranky lunged and hewed away like a man flailing corn, was sufficiently perplexing. Meanwhile, the faces of the fusileers were seen peeping above the hatchway-coamings round which the shot lay, and the seamen at the guns on the main deck stood like statues, surveying in wonder a scene never before witnessed on the poop of a man-of-war.

Kildonan's coolness so bitterly exasperated the choleric captain, that making one violent lunge he overthrust himself, and in falling on the earl's sword, received a deep wound in the breast. He fell heavily on the deck, while a terrible oath, and a deluge of blood left his lips together.

Rendered more mad than ever by this catastrophe, and choking in blood and rage, as the earl bent over him, Cranky snatched a pistol from his belt, and would have shot him through the head; but I saw the action, and quick as thought sprang forward and knocked aside the weapon with my bayonet. The pistol exploded; the ball grazed Lord Kildonan's left ear, and struck a splinter off the mainyard.

"Thanks, Ellis, my good lad," said he calmly; "I believe that I owe my life to you, and I shall not forget the debt."

The report of the pistol brought all who were below, seamen, soldiers, and marines, swarming up the hatches on deck, and the captain was borne senseless to his cabin, and placed under the doctor's care.

This was a singular scene to be enacted on the poop of one of His Majesty's frigates; but I am writing of the year 1794, when there were to be found occasionally in the service, such officers as Smollet has portrayed, under the name of Captain Oakham and, indeed, old Cranky was usually known in the fleet of Admiral Jervis by that cognomen.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LAND !

AFTER this affair we all got on pleasantly enough ; to the great satisfaction of the crew, the choleric captain was confined to his cabin, and the ship was commanded by Mr. Percival, the first-lieutenant. Few other incidents of interest occurred during the outward voyage, which by various delays, lasted about three months ; for until we felt the influence of the trade wind, which seldom varies throughout the year—the same wind which, by its steadiness, excited the terror of the seamen of Columbus—we encountered very foul weather.

After a time, the wonders of the deep—the showers of flying-fish, the brown droves of shining porpoises surging through the sea—leaping as it were, from one watery slope to another—the huge whale rising up suddenly like an inverted ship, with the water pouring in a torrent from its slippery sides, spouting foam, or tossing its mighty tail in the air ; the blue shark gliding stealthily along under the glossy surface of the calm sea, all ceased to excite interest, and the intense monotony of the voyage, together with the dull routine of duty, wearied me : thus, I can well recal the joy I felt, when one morning, about the end of April, Tom Telfer, who had been on the morning watch, pointed out to me, a number of strange birds, that were hovering among the far scattered ships of the fleet, while pieces of sugar-cane, melon and other tropical indications of the shore, floated past from time to time—a joy, only equalled by the disappointment I endured, when after a sudden cry of “land in sight,” from the look-out man in the main-cross-trees, a low dark stripe was declared to be “only Cape Fly-

away," which was slowly exhaled into the meridian sky, and melted without leaving a trace behind.

We were driven to the 40th degree of north latitude, and saw the volcanic hills of the Azores. I remember when at Guadaloupe, finding in a house when on a foraging party a curious history of the discovery of these isles, by Gonsalvo Vello, in 1449, in which there was a quaint and Gothic story of this adventurous voyager, perceiving the figure of a warrior on horseback on the summit of a rock overlooking the sea. "His left hand was on his horse's mane, and his right hand pointed to the west."

Startled on beholding such an apparition in a desolate island, Gonsalvo landed, and the figure was found to have turned into stone, and certain cabalistic characters were graven on the face of the rock before it.

We ran pretty close to St. Michael, the isle of oranges and most eastern of the group; and then, with all the fleet that were in sight, bore up for the island of Barbadoes, our point of rendezvous.

Ere this, I had already reaped a portion of the fruit of my steadiness, and attention to duty since my enlistment, and also of the good education bestowed upon me, by my kind mother, from whom I was now so far, far away.

"Once in the ranks—always in the ranks is the maxim of the British army," says a writer in 1857, who knows little about the matter; "a man who accepts the shilling from the recruiting sergeant, and fulfils an engagement made over his ale in a pot-house, bids adieu to all hope of raising in the military profession; he must give up all ambition, and seek what pleasure he can find in transient indulgences."

Even in the old times of which I write, we did not find ourselves thus degraded in the Scots Fusiliers; at least I—Oliver Ellis—found it otherwise, for old Captain Glendonwyn, after discovering my few qualifications, made me

useful in keeping the books of his company ; and the reader must remember that in those days of practical soldiering, very few non-commissioned officers could read or write. I could do both, and had also a smattering of French and Latin. Thus, I was considered a species of military prodigy ; and when a fever, which broke out in the fleet on its reaching warmer latitudes, swept off several of our sergeants, I was promoted to one of the vacant halberts, and my heart expanded with hope, joy, and ambition, when Lord Kildonan, who, of course, remembered how I had saved him from Cranky's pistol, told me earnestly to continue to conduct myself with care, "and I might yet wear a pair of epaulettes as my father had done before me."

The deaths were so frequent, as to cast a permanent gloom over all on board ; and I still recall the emotions of awe and repugnance, with which I saw each poor corse corded up in blankets and, with a cold shot at its heels, consigned to a grave in the brine, through which the sharks followed us with voracious obstinacy.

On the 3rd of March we saw land in earnest, and with three hearty cheers that rang from ship to ship, we hailed the fertile shores of Barbadoes.

As the fleet drew near, the undulating line of the island rose gradually from the deep resplendent blue of the Caribbean sea, presenting an aspect of that surpassing verdure and fertility to be found in the tropics alone. The tall sugar-canes were swaying in the soft breeze that came from the ocean, and the groves of the plaintains, guavas, pine-apples, orange, lime, and citron trees, all in their varied tints of green foliage and golden fruit, bounding flat green lawns or shading little villages, above which the sugar-mills were tossing their fanlike arms, made Barbadoes a charming scene to eyes that had gazed so long upon the changeless waste of sea and sky.

We ran into Carlisle Bay, and on Admiral Jervis's ship

firing a gun, the whole fleet came to anchor in three lines ; the courses were handed and the yards squared, while crowds of black-skinned and woolly-headed negroes came running out of the plantations to the shore to gaze at us ; and numbers came off from the little bights and creeks in their piraguas or canoes, offering for sale pine-apples at a penny each, guavas, bananas, and monkeys to suck. (*i.e.*, cocoanuts filled with rum). The *Adder*, with the head-quarters of the Fusileers, was the leading frigate of the leeward line, so we were less than a mile from the shore.

A boat was lowered at once to order various stores requisite for the ship. As it splashed into the water, I envied the middy who was to be the first that trod on *terra firma*.

"Now, Mr. Stanley," cried Percival the first lieutenant as he shoved off ; "look out that your boat's crew don't suck the monkey, or by Heaven, youngster, I'll mast-head you for four-and-twenty hours."

On this day the captain appeared on deck for the first time since his duel. Lord Kildonan hastened to offer the assistance of his arm ; which Cranky accepted with a better grace than we could have anticipated, but now their feud was at an end.

Now, my first thought was of *home*. How I longed to write the story of my long and tedious voyage ; to ask forgiveness and a blessing from those I had left behind ; but a knowledge of the difficulty which even officers experienced in the transmission of their letters in those days, made me cast aside, in a species of despair, the pen I had assumed, and I sought to forget my bitterness of heart in gazing on the green shore, and anticipating a release from the thralldom of the frigate.

An emotion of repugnance and alarm thrilled through me, on seeing the number of sharks that played about in Carlisle bay. To me, it seemed as if all the sharks in the ocean were swarming in that small bight of deep blue water.

The sailors averred that "they nosed the soldiers aboard," and knew well when a ship was crowded. One fact is certain, that they were wont to follow the slave-ships hither from the Guinea coast ; and as deaths were frequent on board of such filthy and crowded craft, a day seldom passed without a body being tossed overboard, and we could see it rent to pieces under our eyes by those voracious monsters of the deep—for many slave-ships had come in under convoy and lay at anchor to leeward of the fleet ; to *windward*, would not be tolerated.

In a very old folio history of Barbadoes, I remember my comrade, Tom Telfer, reading to me once, when sick in my hammock, the following singular episode concerning a shark in Carlisle Bay.

In the reign of Queen Anne, an old brig, of 'quaint aspect, high-pooped and low-waisted, named the *York Merchant*, Captain Jack Beams, commander, a letter-of-marque, pierced for ten guns, besides pateraroes (for, in those days, the Indian seas and the Florida Gulf were full of buccaniers) arrived at Barbadoes from England, and landed a cargo in Carlisle Bay. The warmth of the weather, together with the delightful blue of the deep water, tempted one of the seamen to leap overboard and bathe ; but he was scarcely three fathoms from the ship, when there was a cry raised on board :—

"Look out—ware shark !" and an enormous blue one was seen, slowly but surely, with the wake of its body shining under the surface, to shoot towards him.

A sailor, who had a great regard for the luckless swimmer, as they were old friends and messmates, sprang into a boat alongside, and pushed off to his assistance ; but the shark was quicker than he, and he arrived in time only to see the monster open its dreadful jaws, and cut fairly in two the body of his friend, as he raised himself shrieking from the bloody water. All the man below the waist was swallowed

by the shark at a mouthful. The remainder was brought on board, to the horror and dismay of the crew. For more than an hour after this the insatiable shark was seen slowly swimming round the ship (against the sides of which the water rippled in bloody tints), as if waiting for the other half of his victim.

Many a musket-shot was discharged at him, but he escaped them all.

Enraged by this tenacity and temerity, the messmate of the dead man swore that he would have vengeance ; and throwing off his clothes, ere he could be prevented, sprang into the water, armed with a long and sharp-pointed dagger, which he had lashed to his right hand by a lanyard. Even before his white body had risen to the surface, the shark was seen by the ship's crew, making slowly towards him, and they clambered into the rigging and ran out upon the studding-sail booms, where they gazed in breathless astonishment on a combat so unusual and terrific.

At the moment when the shark opened his dreadful jaws, the seaman, with a shout of triumph, dived below, and while grasping the monster's upper fin with his left hand, gave him three stabs in the belly with the dagger which armed his right.

Rendered furious on finding himself so skilfully combated in his own element, the shark plunged to the bottom, leaving the water crimsoned with blood and froth.

Once again he rose to the surface, and again the brave English mariner attacked him in the same manner, and repeated his stabs, until so much blood and foam covered the water, that the scared crew of the *York Merchant* knew not which had the victory—the man or the giant-fish,—until they saw the dead carcass floating, like an inverted canoe, on the surface of the bay, when they hoisted their ensign, fired off their all pateraroes, and hailed the victor with three hearty cheers ; thereafter, adds this quaint old

book, he "by the help of an ebbing tide, drags the shark on shore, rips up his bowels, and unites and buries the severed carcass of his friend in one hospitable grave, on the shore of Carlisle Bay."

The evening on which we came to anchor there was beautiful ; but a succession of such evenings soon ceases to excite comment in the tropics.

The round windsails rigged down every open hatchway, white and swelling, were conveying the cool fresh air into the deepest recesses of the frigate. Her ports triced up, gave, on one side, glimpses of cool and shady lime and orange groves ; on the other, the colder blue of the Carribean Sea ; yet the carronades, when one touched them, felt hot beneath the hand, for the burning heat of the breathless day that had passed, yet lingered about them. Alongside, the water rippled gently under the bends ; and more than every minute, the dark fin of the blue shark—in those seas the most terrible of all its species—rose above the surface of the clear, deep water.

The sweep of Carlisle Bay, so named from the Earl of Carlisle, who obtained from Charles I. a grant of Barbadoes, as "absolute proprietor and lord of the Caribee isles," with the aspect of the capital, occupied me for some time, though the view was, perhaps, more pleasing than striking. It is named Bridgetown, from a bridge that once spanned a river which flowed into the bay, but which was choked or dried up before 1715. The British flag, always a pleasant feature in a foreign land, as it tells so much of home and safety, was flying above the Garrison,—an extensive range of edifices, at the southern horn of the bay ; while the northern is occupied by a battery, the guns of which, peered over a ridge of low coral reefs, whereon the sea was breaking in white foam that sparkled in the light of the setting sun. Beyond, lay Fontabelle, of old the seat of the governors, embosomed among tall cocoanut-trees, the tufted

heads of which were tossing their branches on the evening wind.

Sugar-mills, with huge revolving fans, and rows of giant cabbage-trees, broke the wavy sky-line ; and from a distance, came, at times, the cheerful but guttural chant of the slimy-skinned and woolly-headed negroes, whose sole garments were, usually, a pair of white or yellow cotton breeches. On the wharfs, gangs of them were busy, under the sharp eye and sharper lash of overseers (attired in spotless white, with broad-leaved hats) hoisting or stowing sugars and other goods on board the shipping at the carenage and mole.

Next day most of the troops were disembarked. Some were placed under canvas at a part of the isle which, being mountainous, is named Scotland ; a few were billeted, but the Fusileers had the good fortune to be placed in the garrison at Needham's Point, where Fort Charles, so named by exiled Cavaliers in honour of the first monarch of that name, was built in the days of old.

One requires to undergo the tedium of a long voyage to feel the joy of first stepping ashore.

"Now, here we are in the West Indies again, boys !" I heard some of our men shout as we marched along the shore ; "now for potted missionary, pickled monkey, sangaree, brown girls, red rum, and yellow fever !"

"The mountains all sugar—the rivers all rum."

"Hot marches, mouldy biscuits, yams, and rattlesnakes, plunder and prize-money.

So the thoughtless fellows continued amid reckless laughter (though those islands were literally the grave of Europeans), while they retired to their barracks, in which they were to remain until Sir Charles Grey made his arrangements for beating up the quarters of M. de Rouvigny, the French *chef de bataillon*, who commanded in Martinique.

A rabble of every hue accompanied us to the gates of the

garrison ; their faces exhibiting every variety, from the sable negro of Sierra Leone, to the blanched pallor of the sickly English creole, whose countenance suggested nothing but miasma, yellow fever, and the grave.



CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SNAKE.

I REMEMBER with what delight, in the intervals of duty, I rambled about this fertile and populous island, feeling as if I could never enjoy sufficiently my emancipation from the thralldom and confinement of a ship-of-war, crowded by soldiers, seamen, marines, and stores, for a hostile expedition.

The whole fleet yet lay anchored in three lines in Carlisle Bay, hoisting in fresh water and provisions ; thus scores of smart men-o'-war boats were incessantly arriving at, or departing from, the mole and carenage at Bridgetown, preparing for our departure to Martinique. Armed ships and batteries guarded the coast as a protection against French privateers and Spanish pirates, a few of whom still prowled in the West-Indian seas.

One evening I was returning from the town with the order-book of my company, having been sent on duty to Mr. Haystone, who had quartered himself there in a snug lodging which he preferred to the garrison.

The beauty of the evening, the deep blue of the sky, and the deeper blue of the sea, caused me to deviate from the direct path for the garrison ; and thus, leaving the road to Needham's Point, I wandered for some miles inland, through groves of yams, plaintains, and bananas, and frequently

through deep, narrow dells rent and riven, by volcanic agency, where the sea found inlet and the brown tortoise crawled, and where the rocks were covered by those bearded fig-trees from which this isle of hurricanes was named *los Barbados* by the Spaniards in the olden time.

In other places, the tracts of table-land were covered by the sugar-cane like a sea of wavy green, broken here and there by avenues of lofty cabbage-trees, which led to the villas of proprietors, or to their mills, where the slaves toiled for the production of wealth.

In one of these shady walks I sat for a time, to reflect on the wayward fortune which had cast me in this new land. The air was very still, and had now become oppressive. After a long train of negroes and asses, bearing the sugar of some wealthy planter to the Bridge, had passed me, no sound broke the stillness save the "drowsy hum" of the large black bees depositing their honey in the trunk of an old cotton-tree ; the coo of the turtle-dove in the orange grove, or the rustle made by the keen and glancing eyed racoon, as it sprang from branch to branch of the cabbage-tree, or the palmetto-royal above me.

I felt all the lassitude of the passed day ; a drowsiness was coming over me, but a dread of the scorpions that lurked among the luxuriant grass, and of those great beetle-like insects which are sure to bite sleepers till the blood comes, made me struggle to repress it ; moreover, I knew all the dangers incident to sleeping under the descending dew,—fever, ague, and so forth. I arose, and was about to start on my return to garrison, from which I was now some miles distant, when a voice—a soft and sweet female voice—singing in French, and quite near, made me pause and listen with an undefinable emotion of pleasure ; for it was long since I had heard a voice so seducing and so tenderly modulated ; and it made me think of one whom I had now almost forgotten—my little Amy Lee.

The singer, though not twenty paces from me, was concealed by the luxuriant flowers and shrubbery that grew under the cabbage-trees. But the song ceased with singular abruptness, and then, after a brief pause, followed a half-stifled cry, ending in a heavy sob.

Alarmed by such a sound, and curious to see the singer, I hastened towards her, and beheld a very remarkable, if not a terrible scene.

A lady whose dark eyes and hair corroborated the idea which her song suggested, that she was French, was seated on the gnarled root of a cabbage-tree ; but seemingly paralysed and frozen with terror, for her eyes were fixed on some object, which, at first sight, I was unable to discern. I addressed her, but she did not reply. I would have spoken again, but the power of utterance was denied me, on perceiving, not six feet distant from her, a huge rattlesnake, with its fiery eyes, that seemed lighted by sparks from hell, glaring into hers, while its wavy form glided forward by an almost imperceptible motion, and its tail was raised up—always significant of rage, for then the hollow horny substance with which that appendage is furnished rattles at every motion of the body.

The dark eyes of the French girl—she did not seem more than two-and-twenty—were dilated with horror, her face was deadly pale, her teeth were clenched, and her small white hands clutched the grass among which she was seated. On one side lay the broad round hat which had fallen from her head ; on the other lay her parasol, and a book she had been reading when surprised by this terrible apparition. I glanced wildly round for some long weapon wherewith to arm me, but in vain.

An instant, and all would be over !

Wrath and hate, like those of a fiend, seemed to swell the flattened head, to fire the protruding orbs, and redden the flamelike tongue of this hideous and terrific reptile, the

venom of which, when inserted in its victim by the two long fangs that protrude from the upper jaw, is more virulent and deadly than the poison of any other of its dreadful species.

Pale as a dead woman, and deprived alike of volition, energy—almost of thought—the poor girl gazed on her coming destroyer as if she already felt its poison shooting through her young veins.

I, too, was trembling with terror, and for a moment knew not what to do ; but the conviction that I *must* attempt to save her, or feel myself a branded coward for life, made me act with a decision the recollection of which excites my astonishment even now. I sprang forward, and, regardless of the dreadful fate that might befall me, grasped the serpent fiercely by the neck, and whirled it round my head with such vigour, that it had not time to bite me ; and I dashed it with such tremendous force against the trunk of a cabbage-tree, that it lay still with its eyes glancing upward like two bright carbuncles, and its tail rattling nervously as it whipped and lashed the earth.

Placing my left foot upon its head, I crushed it furiously down into the soft earth, and hewed at the body with my sword until it was cut into as many pieces as there were joints in its tail. The dreadful danger I had run in achieving this victory, animated me by a kind of frenzy, and I continued to slash at the writhing fragments of the snake till my sword-arm grew weary.

On turning to her I had saved, she was lying still and motionless in a heavy swoon.

Raising her in my arms, I bore her to where a little runnel gurgled over a rock, among the luxuriant passion-flowers, and there, undoing the upper portion of her dress, laved her face and neck, her arms and shoulders, with the water, which was very cool, as it trickled under the shadow of the large green leaves ; and while she slowly recovered,

I had time to perceive how delicately she was formed, and how singularly beautiful she was.

Blanched by the terror she had undergone, her features were like alabaster. Her slender throat, her curved shoulders, and the full round swell of her bosom, surpassed all I had ever seen ; and her fine dark hair, how black it seemed, by very contrast, as it fell in wavy masses over them. Above her temples it had a curl in each thick braid—whether by art or nature I know not. Her eyes were closed ; and from the white and veined lid of each, a long thick fringe of the darkest brown was gummed by tears upon her cheek. I could feel her heart beating through the folds of her thin white muslin dress as animation slowly returned.

I was little more than eighteen ; and while holding her in my arms, and laving the water about her bosom, the consciousness that she—this girl so fair and beautiful—owed life to me, filled all my heart with ardour, pride, and joy.

How the huge reptile I had slain found its way into the island, unless among the ballast or cargo of a South-American ship, we could never discover, as in Barbadoes there are few snakes more than three feet long ; and even these are so harmless that the superstitious negroes were wont to respect, and at times to worship them. It is related that a negro, having slain one, was soon after afflicted by a rheumatic pain in his arm ; this he believed to be a punishment inflicted on him by the Obi-man for doing so ; and ever after it was his custom to feed all the snakes that came near his hut, and to place food in such spots as these reptiles were known to frequent.

On the lady recovering, she began to address me in French, but with great incoherence, and while clinging to my arm ; and it was not until after the lapse of several minutes, and I had pointed repeatedly with my sword to the hacked

fragments of the snake, she could understand fully that she was rescued, and by me.

"Oh, monsieur, how shall I ever be able to thank you for the courage with which you have saved me from a dreadful death? Oh, monsieur, tell me—what shall I say—what do? How pour out my thanks to you—my blessings on you—a thousand and a thousand more good prayers and dear wishes shall ever follow you! Speak," she continued, with true French volubility; "speak to me, and say who and what you are?"

While she clung to my arm and poured this forth in the purest French, pressing my hands to her heart, and casting her earnest and beautiful eyes upward to mine, I felt greatly bewildered, and endeavoured to calm her.

"Who are you?" she asked, for the third time.

"What my uniform declares me to be, madame," said I.

"A British soldier?"

"A sergeant in the Scottish regiment of fusiliers."

"A sergeant! Monsieur seems quite a youth."

"I am an unfortunate gentleman, madame."

"Mon Dieu!"

"A strange destiny has cast me into the same ranks which my father once commanded; but——"

"But what?"

I knew not what to say, for this woman's magnificent eyes were searchingly fixed on mine, and they bewildered, or fascinated me nearly as much as those of the serpent had done her.

"Monsieur was about to observe——"

"That I am only too happy in having been here in time to do madame a service."

"You call preserving my life a service—a mere service!"

"And now, madame, I must leave you."

"Leave me already? Oh no, no—this must not be; you

cannot think of this, when I have scarcely known you, and owe you—oh, how much?”

“Madame must excuse me. I have wandered far from my quarters—farther than the orders of the general permit—and I must return to the garrison at Needham’s Point. before the darkness sets in, for being a stranger in Barbadoes, I shall infallibly lose my way.”

“My house is at hand, and ere you go, some wine—some refreshment shall be given you. Monsieur cannot refuse me—a lady—come.”

She placed her arm through mine, and gazed so winningly in my face, that I could not refuse; moreover, for months I had not seen any other of the fair sex than “Mother Mahoney,” nor since the period of my enlistment had been addressed as an equal by a lady; thus, the charm of this Frenchwoman’s manner fascinated not less than her beauty dazzled me, the more perhaps that I was her junior by four or five years.

Shuddering as she passed the hewn fragments of her late source of terror, she led me along the cabbage-walk, as the avenue of magnificent trees (the smallest being forty feet in height) was named, and we soon found ourselves close to a small villa or cottage, surrounded by a broad verandah which was completely covered by luxuriant flowers. The garden was enclosed by lime-trees, which grow there like the holly-bush, full of leaves and fruit, and were wont to be used by the planters of old as a protecting hedge against runaway slaves and wild Carribs. Dusk now set in rapidly, for there is no twilight in these regions, and the cave-bat—the bird of darkness—which here is as large as a pigeon, was flitting among the great palm branches of the cabbage-trees, and the fireflies shot to and fro, like red sparks or tiny meteors.

The villa was entered through a trellised porch of very ornamental form. It was constructed of the wild cane split,

intertwisted and arched in a Gothic style, but covered by the dark and sharp-pointed leaves of the passion-flower or lemon-water-vine, named by some, "love in a mist." Like other West-Indian houses, it was not tiled, but shingled, and was without chimneys. The walls were painted pure white.

Black female servants clad in striped cotton stuffs, with strings of beads and palm-oil nuts about their necks, received us with deep respect, and ushered us into a low-ceiled room paved with square tiles, and having four glazed windows, which opened to the floor. These were unclosed, and the warm night-air—for the tropical night had now set in—was admitted through green Venetian blinds.

Lamps were lighted, and then I could perceive that the apartment was neatly—almost handsomely—furnished in the style of a Barbadian drawing-room of those days; a piano, music, flowers, pictures, books, and a few articles of *bijouterie* were there, with those pretty trifles which we usually find in such an apartment in all countries.

"Pray be seated, monsieur," said the young lady, "and be assured you are most welcome to my abode."

I bowed, and at that moment a clock struck nine. I thought of the roll call, from which I would be absent; but the Frenchwoman's eyes seem to read the alarming thought, and laying her pretty hand upon my arm, she said—

"Hark—do you hear that?"

"It is artillery!" said I, starting.

"Yes, monsieur—the artillery of heaven. 'Tis thunder. The beauty of the past day, and the closeness of the evening, foretold we should have a storm; so be assured you are safer here, than on the road to Needham's Point to-night."

Even while she spoke, we could hear the roar of the thunder hurtling in the distance, while red lines of horizontal light were seen for an instant, as the fierce electric fires of the Antilles flashed through the green spars of the Venetian blinds.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT.

A SENSE of the risk I encountered by absence from my quarters, in a strange country, and while having with me the order-book of my company, a volume which contained so many details relating to our embarkation for Martinique and our mode of landing there, recurred to me so vividly, that after hastily taking a glass or two of wine, on a lull in the booming of the thunder, I arose, and lifting the Venetian blinds gazed upon the night, which was dark—fearfully so, even for the tropics.

“Madame,” said I, with hesitation, lest I might appear ungracious to one so charming in person, and so winning in manner, “I beseech you to excuse me; but—but you spoke a moment since, of the gratitude you owed me for the trifling service—”

“Mon Dieu! he calls my life a trifle—and saving it, a trivial service!” she exclaimed.

“Pardon me, but if missed from the garrison, you know not the penalty I incur, in times of war,” I urged with great earnestness.

“Nay but I do, for I know more of soldiering than I ever care to see again.”

“Then, madame, if one of your servants, or a trusty negro, would be my guide to Needham’s Point——”

She patted my cheek with her large fan, and bending her bright dark eyes into mine, with a glance at once merry and tender, said,—

“Compose yourself; a storm is coming on, and you cannot go.”

"I must, lady," I continued, impelled by the force and habit of discipline ; "without leave, what else can I do?"

"Foolish boy ; you would lose your way and be destroyed. There are steep rocks, covered by creeping plants, so thick and luxuriant, that they would take you up to the neck, and these jungles are full of snakes and fortylegs as large as one's hand, and their bite is dreadful. I think we have had enough of reptiles to-night ! Then there are deep gullies rent by earthquakes, full of slime, dwarf mangroves, wild cucumbers, and other weeds, as tall as a man ; and there lurk in the thickets runaway negroes and others who are worse ; but all bad enough for a solitary stranger to encounter ; and then there will be the rain and the wind and the lightning ; and for all these you would leave my pleasant little drawing-room, and—and——"

"And your society, you would say reproachfully."

"Precisely so. Ah, you know not a midnight storm in the Antilles."

"The night certainly *is* very dark," said I, beginning to yield to her arguments and beauty.

"Yes ; as a French writer says, 'it is one of those nights which are too dark for murder—too dark even for love !'"

"Is it ungallant to say, I am thinking of neither?" said I, laughing, while my cheek flushed as this singular woman placed her white hand gently on mine, as if more fully to persuade me ; "but why that thought?"

"'Tis very natural : darkness makes one think of love, does it not?"

"To me, it would rather be suggestive of danger. For love, I would rather have moonlight."

"But not in the tropics where the moon is like a second sun. But you must not leave me, monsieur, on such a night, and in this place which is so solitary. I have not been used to dwell alone."

"No one lives here with you?"

"None," said she, shaking her head almost sorrowfully, adding, "I am older than you by some years; thus I command you to stay."

My head swam, and my heart seemed to take fire. I felt the pressure of her little hand tightening upon mine.

"I must go," I faltered—yet stayed.

At that moment there was a terrific glare of lightning, and a peal of thunder overhead. I let fall the Venetian blind. We staggered, dazzled by the gleam, and, somehow my arm went round her. She did not altogether resist, for she was terrified, and I led her to a seat in our confusion.

On the sofa we sat in silence for some time, listening to the howl of the rising wind, which was tossing the vast palm branches of the cabbage-trees, causing them to shriek and groan; while some active negroes,—strong herculean fellows, in red osnaburg jackets and drawers,—were hurriedly closing the outer shutters of the house, but leaving the sash-window open; for the heat, even at that season of the year, was somewhat oppressive. Heavy, globular drops of rain now plashed in fierce and rapid succession, till they descended like a sheet of water on the orange and lemon groves, and with a roaring sound on the broad fields of sugar-cane around the villa; and when I looked forth again, through a species of wicket or sliding panel in one of the shutters, the aspect of the night filled me with an emotion of awe.

"You see, monsieur, it *can* rain, when it pleases, here in the West Indies," said the lady playfully; "and in proportion as the rain falls, the wind rises."

The tempest seemed to come from every point of the compass at once. Enormous trees were swaying in every direction. Green forky lightning shot through the sky's gloomy vault tearing asunder the black masses of surcharged cloud, which the wind was also rending, sweeping, and twisting, with frightful rapidity, into an endless variety of forms; the ghastly glare revealing momentarily, and

with wondrous distinctness, the tossing trees, the green leaves, broad branches, and gnarled trunks of the avenue, close by ; and the fields of sugar-cane, afar off, waving forward and backward, like the billows of an inland sea. All this would be visible for an instant ; and then, as the gleam passed away, was shrouded and lost in blinding rain and utter darkness.

“ Now, Monsieur le Soldat, said I not true ? ” whispered the lady, as she shut the panel and we returned to the sofa ; “ where would you have been by this time, and what your fate, had I wickedly permitted you to leave me, and on such a night as this ? ”

“ The debt of gratitude is now transferred from you to me,” said I, smiling ; “ and now I am your willing captive.”

“ Then let us to supper ; we shall talk after.”

The supper consisted of cold fowls, ham, and tongue, served up with anchovies, caviare, and several kinds of sauces. There were fruits, sweetmeats, limes preserved in sugar, and wines of various kinds, but chiefly malmsey and vidonia—the former flavoured like canary, and the latter brisk and dry like sherry, but coloured with tint. While pressing all these good things upon me, I observed that my fair hostess drank only a little cooled citron water—a famous cordial in the Antilles ; but the entire novelty of my situation and perplexity as to who this lady was—whether maid, wife, or widow—deprived me of all appetite ; while the charming frankness the gaiety, and unconcealed coquetry of her manner, made me, at the few years I had then attained, peculiarly liable to any snare she might set for me. These ideas ran swiftly through my mind while seated by her side ; and in truth, such is the force of evil example, and such were the recklessness and easy disposition of those among whom my lot had latterly been cast by sea and land, that I can scarcely be surprised at the flexibility or laxity

of principle, which rendered me tolerably careless as to *how* my new and beautiful friend was related in life. My chief curiosity was to learn her name—my desire to please her.

"May I ask how far I am from the garrison?"

"The garrison—always that tiresome garrison!" said she, selecting some grapes from a basket; "you are, I know not how far; but what does it matter, child, especially in such a storm as this?"

"And this place—how is it named?"

"Boscobelle."

"The beautiful wood?"

"Oui, monsieur, and a charming place you will find it, though that odious serpent was your introducteur."

"And—pardon me—*your* name, madame?"

She changed colour and paused.

"What matters my name?" she asked, with a lovely smile; "are you tired of me?"

"Ah, why that question, madame?" I asked, taking her hand tenderly in mine.

"Because it would seem as if one was weary when one asks questions."

"Pray tell me?" I urged, in a low voice.

"Well, when I was baptized by the old curé of St. Germain de Prez, at Paris, my godmother named me Eulalie——"

"And you are now——"

"Now," she reiterated.

"Still Eulalie only?"

"Have I not told you enough?" she asked, smiling.

"No."

"*Mon Dieu*, how inquisitive it is! Is not Eulalie all you need when addressing me? and you—I must have revenge—how are you named."

"Oliver—Oliver Ellis."

"*Très bon*—Oliver—good ; I shall treasure that in my heart of hearts !"

"And *your* surname ?"

"Oh, you pertinacious and provoking one ! Know then, that, to my misfortune, I am named Eulalie de Rouvigny."

"Surely I have heard this name before ?" said I, starting, and endeavouring to remember.

"Very probably ; it is the name of a well-known French officer, who commands in Martinique."

"The Colonel de Rouvigny, chef de bataillon of a revolted regiment ?"

"The same."

"True—I now remember—a pretty name," said I, taking her hand again and kissing it ; "and yours is Eulalie—that is charming ! Is the colonel any relation ? I should hope not, as we may be fighting with him in the course of next week."

"Ah, no," she replied with a shudder, "no relation."

"You know him then ?"

A smile, singularly sardonic on such a beautiful little face, was perceptible as she answered briefly,—

"Yes."

"How ?"

"He is only my husband."

"*Husband !*" I reiterated, as my romance vanished like a p-bubble.

"*Mon Dieu !* does that surprise you so much, that you must drop my poor little hand as if it were a hot poker, or Surinam beetle ?"

"You will pardon me."

"People, to their misfortune, have husbands sometimes, monsieur," said she with a demure pout.

"And you are here——"

"An emigrant, or prisoner of war—which you will."

"Separated from him——",

"For nearly a year."

"How sad!"

"I do not find it *very* sad; nor would you think so, Monsieur Oliver, if you knew all," said she with an air of annoyance.

"How came this about; for you seem a very willing prisoner of war?"

"I was returning to France in a ship from St. Pierre, but was captured by one of your cruisers, and landed here. M. le Gouverneur of the Barbadoes assigned to me this pretty villa of Boscobelle, to which you, my preserver, are most welcome! What more would you wish to learn?"

I was silent; for I had heard that the wife of a French commander in the Windward Isles was the prisoner of war who had supplied us with many details, as to the number of men, guns, and fortresses in Martinique and Guadaloupe—details which Sir Charles Grey found of the greatest value, when maturing those plans of conquest for which the great armament wherein I formed a unit, was fitted out by Britain.

The rank, name, and solitary condition of my beautiful young hostess, though they would have encouraged an older or more reckless gallant, all conduced to silence and bewildered me. She quickly perceived this; but was too polite, or too politic to remark it, and pressed me to take more wine. I did so; but after a time my perplexity and constraint seemed to annoy her, and she asked,—

"Of what are you thinking, monsieur?"

"What the world might say of all this."

"All what—I do not comprehend, monsieur," said she, while her cheek reddened, and her bosom heaved. "What has the odious world to do with our little supper? But talk not to me of the world," she added bitterly, while her fine eyes flashed with sudden fire; "'tis not the world I dreamed it to be when I viewed it only through the iron

grilles, and gay flower garden of the old convent in which I was reared at Paris. I have lived to see its folly, its hollowness, its bitterness and falsehood. I am without friends, country, prospects—hope! Love may lighten—but death alone could release me from it. Do you understand this?” she asked almost fiercely.

“No, madame.”

“What a child it is!” she exclaimed, pouting again, and then added in a subdued voice; “you have not yet seen your nearest and dearest perish in the shambles of the Place de la Grève, or amid the horrors of the Vendean war—or the greater atrocities of these Indian isles, but let me not think of such things. Fill me a glass of vidonia—thank you. Some time I shall tell you my story; meantime, allow me to assist you to more wine; there is a song which says—

Valour the stronger grows,
The stronger liquor we are drinking;
And how can we feel our woes,
When we’ve lost the trouble of thinking?

She sang this with charming *naïveté* and added, “Monsieur will perceive that I have not lived in barracks without learning something. Do allow me to assist you to more fruit.”

“These are wonderful oranges,”

“They are *not* oranges,” said she, while her naturally coquettish smile returned to her dark eye, and ruddy lip; “do you not perceive that they are longer and larger than the largest orange, and have the flavor of the shaddock?”

“True.”

“I gathered them from a tree in the garden.”

“With those charming little hands.”

“Oh! monsieur is recovering from his surprise I perceive.”

“And they are named—”

“The forbidden fruit,” said she, laughing merrily ; “so I have tempted you as our common ancestor was tempted. ’Tis like a drama at the Porte St. Martin, a serpent in the first act—the fruit in the second—thunder and lightning throughout ;” and sinking back on the down sofa, she burst into a merry fit of laughter. As she did so, I perceived that she had beautiful teeth ; but in all the charms of her person, she was perfect. Again I took her hands in mine.

“Ah, madame, your story—I am full of curiosity : What time so fitting as the present, when we are quite alone and undisturbed ? All is silent, too ; for even the storm has lulled, and is passing away. Yet—yet, I still hear something.”

“What is it ?”

“The beating of my heart.”

“Hush. We must not speak thus. Well, *attendez, mon soldat*, and you shall learn how I came to be seated by your side to-night in this lonely villa, in the island of Barbadoes.”

Still permitting me to retain her hands in mine—for she was full of little coqueties—she cast down her fine eyelids, and after a few moments’ reflection, began, as nearly as I can remember, in the following words, a narrative sufficiently full of incident to have made a three-volume novel.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE STORY OF EULALIE.

My father, Marie-Dominique Louis de Mazancy, Sieur de St. Valliere, was a gentleman of Lower Dauphiny, and the lineal descendant of that unfortunate M. de Mazancy, whom M. le Terrail slew in presence of Henry IV., before the windows of the gallery of the Louvre, and whose death so deeply affected that monarch, who, as history records, loved and respected him beyond all his courtiers. My father was chef de bataillon of the Régiment de Dauphiné, of the French line, and having served in all the wars of the late king's reign, was a chevalier of St. Louis and all the royal orders. He was the bosom friend and brother soldier of the brave Comte de Lusignan, colonel of the Régiment de Flandre (which was entirely composed of persons of the second order of nobility), whose venerable head became the foot-ball of a Parisian mob.

I was named Marie Domenica, after my father, and Eulalie, after my poor mother, Mademoiselle de Losme, sister of the unfortunate major of the terrible Bastille. M. le Major de Losme was a brave and worthy officer, who, by his extreme gentleness and compassion, had done much to alleviate the sorrows of the unhappy prisoners who pined in the towers and dungeons of that dreaded fortress; yet this availed him nothing, when it fell before the cannon and beneath the execrations of the people. He perished with the Governor, M. de Launay, in the hands of a frenzied multitude in the Place de la Grève.

I was educated at a little distance from Paris in an Ursuline convent, situated among the vine-covered hills of Mont l'Hery; and while there enjoyed the friendship of

Mademoiselle de Karalio, one of the most celebrated ladies in France, authoress of a history of Elizabeth of England, and many other works—a lady whose pen vigorously defended the demolition of the Bastille, and exculpated the miserable M. Danry, who was incarcerated there for life for having offended——

I interrupted her,

“The king, of course?”—

“No ; for something then esteemed much more serious ; his royal father’s mistress.”

“Madame de Pompadour?”

“Yes.”

“And a life was required to expiate this !”

Madame resumed her narrative.

You see how much my country required a revolution of some kind. At the end of fourteen years M. Danry wrote two penitent letters, one to the Minister of France ; the other to Madame de Pompadour, full of tears, of penitence, and prayers for mercy ; describing his hair, which from being a rich brown, had now become thin and grey ; his wasted form and exceeding misery, adding that he had almost lost all his faculties by the very monotony of his captivity ; but these sorrowful productions—the keen outpourings of a broken spirit and a broken heart—were never delivered.

Years rolled on.

Louis XV and his Pompadour were gathered to their fathers ; Louis XVI. succeeded, and thereafter, poor M. Danry died in his dark dungeon ; and when the Bastille was demolished, his two sorrowful letters were found in the Governor’s house with their seals *unbroken*. Mademoiselle Karalio showed them to me, with cold irony in her intelligent eyes, when I was weeping for the terrible death of my uncle, the Major de Losme.

The terrors of the Revolution, as detailed to me by Mademoiselle, and the horror I felt on hearing that my gentle

mother had been guillotined for no other crime than being an aristocrat and the sister of De Losme, filled me with such a disgust for life, that I conceived the idea of taking the veil in some convent remote from Paris (the vicinity of which was far from safe), and of retiring for ever from a world of which I knew but little, and in which I had so few ties ; for my father was then serving abroad, having command of the French troops in the islands of Martinique and Guadaloupe.

These resolutions were warmly seconded by him, as he had once made a vow, after a narrow escape in battle, if he ever had a child, to dedicate it to the Church ; and by the Ursulines with whom I had lived for seven years, and among whom I made many dear and amiable friends, his views were earnestly urged. I redoubled all the austerities we had hitherto practised, and, inspired by a religious fervour, on which I now look back with astonishment—for I was barely twenty—spent nearly my whole time in the chapel of our establishment and on my knees.

I had commenced my five years' noviciate, and measures were in progress for my removal, together with all the younger ladies of our house, to a more remote convent of the order, when one day a card was brought to me by a lay sister. It was inscribed—

“Le Chevalier de Losme.”

I started on receiving it, and remembered that this gentleman, my cousin Adrien, had long been absent with the army in India, and under the circumstances of his recent bereavement, I could not decline to receive him. I could neither repress the blush that rose to my cheek, or certain emotions of awkwardness and curiosity, when I remembered that it had once been a favourite project of my mother and her brother the major of the Bastille, to marry me to this identical cousin, and that he was cognizant of their wish.

I adjusted my hood and veil, adopted my most severe and

demure expression of face, and in presence of Madame the Superior, awaited, with something of an inward flutter, the entrance of my cousin.

He reminded me in feature almost painfully of my dead mother. He was young and handsome, and still wore, in defiance of the Revolutionists, the white and gold-laced uniform of the Régiment de Bearn. His face expressed gravity, and his eyes had a sadness in them that made him very interesting, especially to an enthusiastic and imaginative young girl. When his quiet eyes met mine, their glance, I knew not why, troubled me, and my cheek flushed so redly, that our Superior afterwards remarked my emotion. When he spoke to me kindly and tenderly as my kinsman, I became uneasy, unhappy, and disturbed.

Why was this? You smile; ah, already you begin to perceive that Mademoiselle Eulalie was not fated to fulfil her father's wish.

"My dear cousin, I have just returned from Pondicherry," said he kissing my hand in defiance of the frowns of Madame the Reverend Mother, "and reached this now hateful city of Paris only in time to find the common scaffold wet with the blood of all that was noble in France—all that were nearest and dearest to you and to me; and now I go to Flanders, to seek vengeance under the banner of M. le Comte d'Artois, who has collected an army of emigrants, and has honoured me with a commission in the regiment of Noble Infantry."

"Shall—shall I not see you again?" I asked timidly, for in spite of me, my heart was warming and yearning towards this handsome young man, my only kinsman in France and, save my father, in the world."

"Oh, if you wish it, my dear Eulalie."

"He calls me 'dear Eulalie,'" said I, in my heart. It seemed so oddly, so new to be thus addressed by a man; and my own name never sounded so sweet or so musical before.

"And you have resolved on this secluded life, cousin?" said he, playing with his aiguillettes.

"Yes; it is my choice," said I, sighing.

"It is terrible, Eulalie," he urged impressively.

"And is my father's wish," I added, sighing again.

"But it was *not* the wish of madame your mother. Do you remember how often she jested with me about my little wife—you cannot have forgotten those happy childish days."

I was blushing painfully, for the Superior's impatience, as the conversation became more and more perilous, was marked and oppressive, though my soldierly cousin heeded the old lady not in the least.

"Oh, Eulalie," he continued, "I trust you have weighed the matter well. Life is a precious gift, and not to be trifled with."

I became painfully agitated; but, as my mother's name filled my eyes with tears, Cousin Adrien changed the subject.

"And you leave Paris?" I asked.

"Very soon, unless you would wish me to remain a little time, to see you again; but I am already, I fear, a suspected man. The son of the Chevalier Major de Losme, is nowhere safe in France," he added bitterly; "and so the veil is your choice, my beautiful cousin. I dare not congratulate you; but I pray in my inmost heart, that you may be happy, dear Eulalie!"

He bowed and retired, but his voice seemed to linger in my ear. The brow of our reverend mother was clouded, and I hurried to my little cell full of new and strange thoughts. I cast myself upon my bed and wept, I knew not why. I strove to thrust aside the image of my cousin—to turn my mind to prayer and the duties of my office; but in vain; the handsome form and figure of the dark and sad-eyed young man, in his white uniform and gold

aiguillettes still hovered before me, and I began to wonder when he would visit me again.

"This is quite natural ; there is nothing wrong in the interest I feel in Adrien," said I ; "he is my kinsman, the nephew of my dear mother, who is now in heaven."

"It matters not, Eulalie," said the superior, who followed me one day and overheard my remark ; "you must think no more of him ; bend your thoughts in prayer, and say a *Salve Regina* daily ; each morning and evening intreat the protection of St. Ursule, and shun alike the society and the sophistries of that vile woman Karalio, whose writings have corrupted Paris and are tainting you."

I endeavoured to do all this ; but my cousin's next visit overturned every little plan, and I now began to perceive that I had viewed seclusion on one hand, and the external world on the other, through false mediums. I was no longer content and tranquil ; I still prayed with ardour, but prayer soon became a task,—my thoughts rebelled against myself, and strayed ever from the duties set before me.

At last a crisis came ! One night we were roused from sleep by the sound of drums and alarm-bells ; by the glare of torches and the gleam of weapons, as a revolutionary mob, which had sacked and demolished a chateau in our vicinity, flushed with bloodshed, wine, and outrage, assailed the convent. Its doors were driven in ; the chapel was pillaged of its altar-vessels, vestments, and reliquary ; the nuns were driven forth with every indignity, and two who attempted to rebuke the multitude were stripped nearly nude and bayoneted. I fled I know not whither ; so great was my terror, that I must have been almost bereft of reason, as I can only remember being found in a peasant's hut by my cousin, the Chevalier de Losme, some weeks after the destruction of the convent of St. Ursule ; for the moment he heard of that catastrophe, he had hastened from Paris to Mont l'Hery to save and protect me.

My ecclesiastical habit being no longer a safeguard in France, I laid it aside for ever. My cousin procured for me a residence in a secluded village, and promised to get me released from the remainder of the five years' vows I had taken ; and with mutual promises of love and fidelity we separated in tears and sorrow, as he repaired to join the army of the Comte d'Artois.

He wrote to Martinique, and duly informed my father of all that had passed,—of what were our own views and wishes, and how dearly he loved me ; but the Sieur de Mazancy was indignant on learning that I wished to return to the world, and wrote to the chevalier and to me, reprehending in severe terms my desire to obtain a double dispensation, which was necessary, as we were related within the degrees forbidden by the church. This communication filled me with agony, sorrow, and alarm ; but my spirit soon rose, for the free-and-easy precepts of the time, as instilled into me by Mademoiselle Karalio, made me revolt against so severe an exertion of parental authority.

My father's letter was delivered to me by a subaltern—a sous-lieutenant of his regiment—named Thibaud de Rouvigny, a native of Dauphiny, where his father was steward of our estates. He was a man of a dreadful nature, for though, externally suave, smiling, polite, and winning, at heart he was a villain of the deepest dye ; and the distance at which he found me from aid, my helplessness and personal attractions, made him conceive the most daring designs against me, with the most dazzling hope of success ; yet he was too wary to speak to me *then* of love, and his whole conversation consisted of pious morality—of resignation to the wish of my father and to the will of God. I deemed him a model of goodness and propriety, and opened up all my heart to him. There were times when I thought a sinister gloom shot across his face ; but this might be the

result of a deep sword-cut, by which his forehead had been laid open.

My cousin Adrien had now been absent from me some months ; but his heart was inspired by undiminished love ; and through M. le Comte d'Artois, who was sincerely attached to him, he hoped ultimately to overcome alike the scruples of my father and those of the exiled Archbishop of Paris, who maintained that I ought to complete in some Ursuline Convent the five years of the white veil.

Rouvigny affected to sympathize with me, and by his artful advice I wrote two letters, one to my father, in which I stated that I renounced the Chevalier de Losme for ever, as I had ceased to love him. To Adrien, I wrote assuring him that the threats, the animosity or repugnance of my father to our union would never influence me in the slightest degree, or lessen the tender love I bore for him, and him only ; and these two most important letters I sealed up and committed to the care of the Sous-Lieutenant Rouvigny.

What think you he did in secret ?

He opened the covers and *transposed* the contents ; sending to my father the letter in which I breathed the purity of my passion for De Losme, and to De Losme the letter for my father in which I renounced him for ever !

After the performance of this perfidy, Rouvigny left me, and I saw him no more, in France at least, for he was ordered back to Martinique, with a detachment for my father's garrison.

My dear cousin was filled with grief on receiving a document so unexpected. He knew my writing and signature too well to imagine there was any deception. He wrote me a sorrowful adieu, and next morning volunteered for a forlorn hope at the storming of a redoubt near Louvain. He was taken prisoner, and offered life and liberty by

Dumourier, if he would only say "Vive la Nation—à bas le Roi." He refused, and was shot dead by a platoon.

One of the balls which pierced his heart had also pierced a letter that was worn next it.

That letter was mine—the fatal letter transmitted to him by the perfidious Rouvigny, of whose treason I was yet ignorant.

Such was the fate of the faithful and brave De Losme !



CHAPTER XXXII.

STORY OF EULALIE CONTINUED.

I WAS still mourning for Adrien, when my father wrote me to join him by the first ship for Martinique, as France had now become a land of horror, where daily—yea, hourly—massacres took place in every city and hamlet, and where, under the general title of aristocrats, priests, nuns, and noblesse were butchered, banished, or maltreated, with a barbarity worthy of the industrious cruelty of Caffres or Carib Indians.

In a month after this, I sailed from Havre in the corvette *Egalité*, and without emotion saw the two light-houses on the steep white brow of Cape la Hève sink like stars into the blue evening sea, for I was more dead to the world than when in the convent of St. Ursule, and (save for my father's sake) careless whether or not I ever saw the isle of Martinique.

I shall not detain you with the monotony of the voyage, though its even tenor was broken by two startling inci-

dents—our flight from a British frigate, which followed us pertinaciously for ten days, and shot away some of our spars and sails, and might have taken us, but for a dark and stormy night, in which we lost sight of each other ; the second incident had more direct reference to myself, for on that night I had a narrow escape from a monster of the deep.

I was awakened by water pouring into the little berth in which I slept ; when, lo ! it was discovered that a sword-fish had driven its nasal weapon into the ship, through a double sheathing of iron, a planking three inches thick and deep, into one of the frigate's timbers, where it was found torn from the animal's body.

A fortnight after this, I reached Martinique, to find that the horrors I had left behind me in France had commenced there with equal, or, if possible, with greater fury. The inhabitants—white, black, and coloured—were in revolt ; the garrisons were in mutiny, and all was havock, bloodshed and disorder.

Terrified and bewildered by the scenes that met me, I reached the citadel of St. Pierre, over which the tricolor had replaced the white banner of the Bourbons. I was compelled to proceed there on foot, under a burning sun ; for when I inquired at the hotel for a carriage, I was insulted as an "aristocrat." On reaching the gate of the fortress, I found the guard in a state of disorder and intoxication, seated under a verandah, smoking Havannah cigars, and drinking sangaree. I requested one to lead me to their commander.

"What commander do you mean ?" stammered one.

"The commandant," said I indignantly ; "M. de Mazancy, Chevalier of St. Louis, and Sieur de St. Valliere."

"Who the devil are you talking about, citoyenne ?" asked a tipsy corporal with an oath ; "we know of no such man,

as the assembly has abolished all such trumpery and orders of nobility."

"*Ma belle*," said another, "you mean old Citizen Mazancy, whom we have sent to the *gamelle*—where, *par Dieu*, he has before sent me and many a better man."

"*A bas les aristocrats—vive la nation—vive la Ligne !*" cried one or two others reeling round me.

Paris seemed to have followed me over the sea, for the wretches now seized me with great rudeness.

"Ouf, my little coquette," said one, tearing off my head-dress, "is this the latest fashion from Paris?"

I burst into tears, as I knew not what was in futurity for my father or myself, if such were the state of his garrison, in which he had maintained a discipline worthy of the proverbial Colonel de Martinet of the Régiment du Roi; and, indeed, that officer had always been my father's favorite model. The tipsy corporal was about to insist on kissing me, when he was roughly thrust aside by a tall dark officer, in whom, by his fierce eyes, enormous moustache, and cicatrized forehead, I recognized Thibaud, the son of our old steward at St. Valliere.

"Rouvigny," I exclaimed; "help me, M. de Rouvigny," while the soldiers uttered a half-tipsy shout of mockery and anger at the intrusion of an epaulette.

"Eulalie—Mademoiselle Eulalie here—here in Martinique! what marvel is this?" he asked; "I am so enchanted to see you, that I am without words——"

"Excuse me, M. le Lieutenant" said I coldly, for I had now certain undefined suspicions regarding him; "but be assured that the enchantment is exclusively your own."

"Mademoiselle," said he, attempting to kiss my hand, "I am honoured."

"That is as may be," I replied sharply; "but lead me to my father."

"Her father!" exclaimed the soldiers, in varying tones of surprise and regret; "*Sang, Dieu!* 'tis the daughter of old Citizen Mazancy."

"Excuse me," said the lieutenant, with a troubled expression; "but at present this introduction is impossible."

"Impossible!" I reiterated, proudly and indignantly; "*Mon Dieu!* what do you mean, sir? Does he not command the troops in this island?"

"He *did* 'command them.'"

"Did?"

"Oui, mademoiselle."

"Has he, too, been superseded by the National Assembly?"

"No, mademoiselle—citoyenne, I mean."

"By whom, then?"

"By the people, citoyenne—the nation as represented by the free citizens of Martinique, who now decline to recognize an officer who was sent here by Louis XVI., and is resolutely bent on upholding the name and authority of the boy in the Temple, whom he names Louis XVII."

"Oh, what is this you tell me, sir!" I exclaimed, clasping my hands; "my father——"

"Is a state prisoner."

"Where, monsieur—where? Lead me to him—to my father—my dear father, whom I have come so far to see, and to make the depository of my sorrows," I implored, in a passion of grief, as his thin and reverend figure seemed to rise before me; "M. Rouvigny, lead me to him."

"Mademoiselle, I tell you it is impossible; but you shall see him to-morrow."

"When?"

"At noon."

"Where?"

"In this barrack-yard," he replied gloomily.

"How, monsieur,—how?"

"*Tonnerre de Ciel!*" said the ruffian, casting off all disguise, "with a handkerchief at his eyes, and a platoon of twelve muskets levelled at his breast. You have reached Martinique in good time to see how we handle those who have so long trodden the people under foot."

I wrung my hands, and would have sunk on hearing those terrible tidings so coldly, so savagely announced, had not Rouvigny grasped my arm.

"Oh, my father!" I gasped; "and I—I——"

"Must meantime, as an aristocrat, become *my* prisoner," said he, while his cruel and sinister eyes sparkled with an expression which there was no mistaking, and by which I could not fail to be struck by greater horror and dismay.

"Your prisoner!" I exclaimed, while the light seemed to pass from my eyes, the life from my crushed heart, and the strength from my limbs, as I became insensible, and remember no more until the following day.

By the rays of the sun that played upon the wall, I suspected that noon,—the time at which I was to see my father—must already have arrived. I started on discovering that I was a prisoner in one of the vaulted chambers of the citadel of St. Pierre.

My present situation, the last words of Rouvigny, and the danger that menaced my helpless father, all rushed, with returning life, upon me, and I sank back on the truckle-bed, to which, no doubt, the soldiers had, overnight, conveyed me. My wretched apartment was a mere stone vault. Near me, a pitcher of water was placed upon a stool. I drank thirstily, and on rising looked about me.

My prison had two windows or horizontal slits, grated with iron; and through these the sun's rays struggled feebly in. From one I could perceive the two slender spires of the town, and the road beyond it, winding over a green hill to Fort Royal, with the bright glassy bay of St. Pierre

full of shipping. From the other, I could perceive the courtyard of the citadel, where, already, the soldiers of the garrison were gathering with arms in their hands and a sullen expression in their faces.

Anon I heard the rolling of drums echoing in the fortifications, and then the troops fell into their ranks by companies. The officers who commanded them were no longer like the decorated chevaliers of old France. They were taken from the ranks—men of the people—and were divested of all ornaments, epaulettes, or lace; and as a badge of office, wore each a tricoloured sash over their plain blue surtouts; while in scorn of powder and trimming, their coarse black hair streamed in uncombed masses from beneath their large cocked hats. My heart grew sick on beholding them; for here, as in Paris, it was too evident that the religion of nature,—the power of the sovereign people,—liberty, equality, and fraternity,—with other political cant of the time, and of the murderous sections of the capital, together with bloodshed, robbery, and outrage, were triumphant and victorious. In confirmation of this several cries reached me.

“A bas les aristocrats!”

“Down with the Red Ribbon!”

“Vive le bon citoyen Rouvigny! Vive la République démocratique et sociale!”

These came chiefly from an excited mob of revolutionists, who poured like a living tide into the citadel, to fraternize with the soldiers of the line—now accepted children of the new *régime*. Among their mass of squalor, rags, and filth, crime, and intoxication, were hundreds of white women and French mulatto girls; like the ancient Bacchantes of Greece, more than half nude, crowned by garlands of vine-leaves, with wildness in their faces, frenzy in their gestures, and dishevelled hair; clashing cymbals and brandishing knives that were stained with the blood of many of the

secular clergy, Jesuits, and wealthiest planters. They sang the "Carmagnole," and many obscene ditties, while dancing and gyrating in mad groups around two ruffians, each of whom bore upon his pike a human skull.

There were the ghastly heads of two of my father's favourite officers, MM. de la Bourdonaye and St. Julian, both young and noble gentlemen of Dauphiny, who were accused of no other crime than being descended from two of the best houses in France, and who had been murdered in cold blood in the vaults of the citadel. In very mockery, as it were, each poor skull had on a wig nicely powdered, and loyally tied with white ribbons. The heads were borne before a prisoner who was ignominiously bound with ropes, and led forward between an escort whose bayonets were fixed.

A shriek rose to my lips, but died there, as I clutched my prison-bars, and swung on them madly ; for in this prisoner, who was greeted with a yell, I recognized my father—my father, Louis de Mazancy—the Sieur de St. Valliere, the first gentleman of Dauphiny, and Premier Chevalier of the Grand Cross of St. Louis.

Firmly, erect, and proudly, the old man strode to his doom. He wore the white uniform of the old French line. His hair was powdered and dressed *à la* Louis XV. ; his orders were glittering on his breast ; his aspect was singularly calm, dignified, and sweetly venerable. He was resolved to die with honour to the garb he wore, the race he sprang from, and the old monarchy of the Capets, the Valois, and the Bourbon, which, in that hour of shame and peril, he felt he represented ; and, in defiance of the living tide of *canaille* who surrounded him, he repeatedly exclaimed with a clear and loud voice,—“ Vive le Roi, Vive Louis XVII., King of France and Navarre ! ”

Yells, and the ominous flashing of brandished weapons

followed him ; the loud voice of Thibaud de Rouvigny was heard commanding silence ; and he was obeyed, being now elected commander of the forces in the new republican state of Martinique. Such sudden elevations were not unusual in those days of the subversion of all right and rule. A poor sergeant of marines, named Jean-Baptist Bernadotte, was thus made colonel-in-chief of a battalion of mutineers, while all his officers were ironed and cast into prison. Unlike Rouvigny, who murdered many of his hapless superiors in cold blood, Bernadotte's first act of authority, was to order the release and dismissal of all who bore commissions under King Louis.*

The unfortunate chevalier saw them take his epaulettes and sash from his shoulders and tread them under foot ; he saw his sword broken over his head and flung away, and he only vouchsafed a scornful smile ; but when the red ribbon and gold cross of St. Louis, with its motto *Bellicæ Virtutis Præmium*, was rent from his breast, "the iron seemed to enter his soul," and a scarlet flush rose to his pale thin temples ; for this badge of long and faithful military service he valued more than all the heraldic honours of the line of Mazancy. To have it torn thus from his breast, and trampled under the foot of Thibaud de Rouvigny—the clown whom he had brought from his Seigneurie in Dauphiny—the wretch whom he fostered and promoted—oh, it was a bitterness too much even for an old soldier's philosophy.

M. le Chevalier Dutriel endeavoured to lessen these degradations, but the attempt nearly cost him his own life.

"My cross," I heard my father exclaim ; "take it !

* I need scarcely remind the reader that "poor" Sergeant Bernadotte, to whom Eulalie referred, the most distinguished of all "the children of the Republic," died in 1822, Marshal Prince of Ponte Corvo, and King of Sweden.

Bravely was it won when leading Frenchmen—yea, the fathers of many among you—at Belleisle, in Western Florida, and under La Fayette, for the freedom of America. The hands of our anointed king gave it to me, and those of rebels cannot degrade it.”

“Down with the aristocrat ! ” cried the troops.

“A la lanterne ! ” added the copper-coloured Bacchantes.

“Down with the enemy of France, of liberty, and the people ! ” shouted the multitude.

My father now proceeded to accuse Rouvigny of ingratitude, and of seducing the garrison from their allegiance ; but, as in the case of their royal master, the drums were ordered to beat that his voice might not be heard.

Rouvigny now unsheathed his sword, and pointing to the prison window, on the bars of which I clung, said something to my father, who trembled and turned towards it. Still more to embitter his last moments, the wretch was no doubt informing him of the vicinity of his only child, for he stretched his fettered hands towards the grating, with a piteous expression in his venerable face.

“Father—father ! ” I exclaimed, but at that moment Rouvigny forced him down upon his knees ; a handkerchief was bound over his eyes ; I saw the gleam of arms as the firing platoon drew up, and a coffin was borne through the excited mob, who parted before and collapsed behind it, like the waves of the sea round a vessel. I was voiceless, breathless, powerless ! I could not even pray !

I sank upon my knees and muffled my head in the skirt of my dress, to shut out the dreadful sound that was sure to follow all I had seen ; but *that sound*—the death-volley which slew my father, seemed to split my ears, like rolling thunder !

When I looked again, the multitude were yelling and whooping round a prostrate and bleeding form, which was

thrust into a rude coffin and borne away by black slaves, while the naked Bacchantes of whom I have spoken danced hand in hand around it, and, as it disappeared, a blessed insensibility came over me.

Such was the fate of my father, the *Sieur de Mazancy*, commander of the royal troops in *Martinique*.

After this, several days passed ; of these I have little other recollection than hearing from time to time sounds of tumult ; the echo of musket-shots, and wild cries from the town of *St. Pierre*, where the republicans of all colours were leaguings with the blacks and revolted troops to destroy the wealthy planters and their families. Overcome in mind and body by the terror I had endured, and a horror of my present position, I would have sunk altogether, but for the kindness and ministrations of *Benoit le Noir*, an old Obeah negro of my father's, who had obtained the office of sweeping the prisons and cleansing the scaffold in the citadel, and who, almost forced me to eat some cakes made of a delicate fruit, and to drink from time to time the contents of a gourd bottle, which he carried in his wallet of grass-matting. The beverage it contained was *vidonia* wine and citron juice, seasoned with sugar and nutmeg ; it refreshed and sustained me, and I remember more than once drooping my aching head upon the shoulder of this old slave and weeping bitterly, for in my loneliness I felt how true it is that,

One touch of nature makes the whole world *kin*.

After the first paroxysm of grief was past and I had become tolerably resigned, I was visited by *Thibaud de Rouvigny*. I remembered how my father had upbraided him, and the part he had performed at his execution—let me rather call it murder !—and I received him with coldness almost loathing. But he only smiled, seated himself upon

my truckle bed, and persisted in endeavouring to console me. Let me hasten over an interview, the result of which makes me now despise myself ! But, oh, what was I, a poor girl broken in heart and crushed in spirit !

He told me that, as an aristocrat, I was doomed to death by the laws which had regenerated France ; laws, which the provisional government of Martinique recognized ; that the warrant for my execution had already been signed by *him* ; but that one way remained by which I could be saved.

"A way—oh ! name it, monsieur," said I imploringly.

"Marriage with a citizen—a child of the Republic."

"Oh, this is adding absurdity to cruelty—insult to misfortune," I replied with clasped hands.

"*Tonnerre de Ciel !* mademoiselle," said he, "or shall I rather say Citoyenne Eulalie ?—be calm, and listen to a friend."

"Friend !" I reiterated with a scornful shudder.

M. Rouvigny smiled coldly.

He then proceeded to say how long he had loved me ; that he would cast himself and his power (he had succeeded my poor father in his civil and military authority) at my feet ; but I turned from him with the aversion he merited. The scar on his brow grew black with rage—his cheeks crimsoned and his eyes glared ; I was terrified—yea, fascinated by fear, even as when yonder horrid reptile reared its head at me this evening.

Alas ! I had not the courage of Charlotte Corday, or others who, like her, shall live in history.

To be brief, I felt myself too young, too unprepared, too fond of life and full of hope for the future, to die yet ; and to be spared the horror of a public assassination——"

She paused.

"You consented to marry this villain," said I, with a tone almost of pique, "this Thibaud Rouvigny ?"

"I did." (She shuddered like one in an ague.) "What

mercy could I expect from Rouvigny? 'Twas his brother who clove with a hatchet the head of the helpless, innocent, and lovely Princess de Lamballe, and who held it aloft on a pike, with her beautiful golden hair waving around the bloody staff, as he thrust it against the barred window of that chamber in which Marie Antoinette was seated with the captive Louis, in the Tower of the Temple. His family were all in the sections of Paris. *Mon Dieu!* they were a generation of tigers!

"To satisfy my scruples, the curé of the Ursuline chapel at St. Pierre performed the burlesque of a marriage ceremony *in secret*, for all religion is abolished in the colonies as in France, and thus sanctified, to save my miserable life, I became the bride—the victim of Rouvigny——"

She paused again and wept, while her flushing face was bowed upon her snow-white hands.

"And this is your story, madame?"

"Yes."

"It is a sorrowful one."

"God alone knows what may be its sequel."

"But you left Martinique——"

"A fugitive."

"How?"

"The coarseness and cruelty of Rouvigny drove me almost mad, but they supplied me with courage; and three weeks after my—(can I call it marriage?)—by the aid of Benoit, the faithful old negro, I escaped from the citadel, and reached a small merchant vessel which was bound for Havre under American colours. The master took pity upon me, for my father had once done him a service. We put to sea; a new hope began to fill my heart—the hope that *freedom*, a homeless, friendless, and penniless freedom inspired—when, within a day's sail of St. Lucia, we were captured by the British frigate *Adder* (whose captain our

false colours failed to deceive), and taken to this island, where the Governor, in commiseration of my misfortunes, assigned to me this pretty villa of Boscobelle, and a little income."

"And you are now happy?" said I, taking her hands in mine.

"Almost—for I am free."

"Is this M. Rouvigny still at Martinique?"

"Yes, as commandant."

"Good! we shall soon be there, and perhaps, madame, it may be my happy lot to avenge you," I exclaimed, with an ardent impulse which her story and misfortunes both inspired.

Such was the adventurous narrative of Eulalie, ere the conclusion of which the early hours of morning surprised us.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

OUR ESTEEM PROGRESSES.

HER beauty, her winning manner, and a lisping broken English (for much that she said *was* in broken English, though we generally conversed in French), all conduced to lend an additional charm to this fair foreigner. Her story and her friendlessness filled my heart with interest, and with her image. After this night, she frequently spoke to me of Rouvigny, and always with abhorrence; but of her first love, the Chevalier de Losme, she never spoke again. I remarked this, and though I knew that this man had loved her long ago and was dead, the conviction that she felt an

interest in his memory galled and fretted me. Why was this?

I leave casuists to determine.

This was likely to be my second love affair, for with soldierlike facility, I had already forgotten poor little Amy Lee.

I had many misgivings regarding Madame de Rouvigny, fearing that although I had told my junior rank, as I wore a white jean jacket, she believed I was an officer, and that a discovery of the truth might lessen her interest in me ; but in this I was deceived.

After an almost sleepless night, I was up with early morning, knowing that I was for guard that day, and sought the shady verandah which encircled the villa. There, a sable negro girl, clad entirely in white, brought me coffee, and then I was soon joined by my hostess, who bade me "good morning" with the most charming grace. She wore a most becoming morning dress of spotless white muslin, edged with rich lace, and a jaunty little French cap, beneath which her black hair was confined in massive braids ; her eyes were sparkling, and her lips were red as those of an infant. She had a piquant and coquettish manner, and sipped her coffee from a tiny china cup, with the prettiest air in the world.

We had a true Barbadian breakfast in the cool verandah ; then Madame assumed her green parasol, and we strolled towards the avenue, for I could no longer conceal from her, that however deep my desire to linger at Boscobelle, I was under the greatest anxiety to reach head-quarters, and report myself to Captain Glendonwyn and Mr. Rolster, our paragon of an adjutant.

Except a few twisted and broken palm-branches, no trace remained of the tempest of last night. The morning sun was ascending into a clear blue sky. Refreshed by the

midnight torrents of rain, the trees wore their gayest green, the flowers their brightest tints. In the distance, the sugar-mills were whirling their brown fans merrily—their brick walls covered with blue wash, and gorgeous with flowering creepers and parasites. The rich aroma of the wild cinnamon, and of many other spices, loaded the air with delicious odours, as the soft breeze swept over the island from the sea.

Close by us, were groups of bronze-like negroes chatting and singing merrily, as they hoed among the tall and bending sugar-canes, and dug up the ginger roots, which are generally ripe in March. The little humming-birds were spreading their bright winglets on the ambient air, as they roved like large bees, from one gay flower to another, in search of food; while the increasing brilliance of the sun, as his beams fell in broad flakes between the great cabbage-trees, lit up the leaves, stalks, and petals of the flower-beds, seeming to gem them round with emeralds and diamonds, for yet the dew lay deep on every shrub and tree.

Near the foot of the avenue, down which we walked rather silently, we found the remains of our late acquaintance the snake. The negroes, I have said, consider such reptiles sacred, and while Quashi, an old Coromontee, was interring it with the utmost respect and awe, I examined the rattle in its tail. If, as naturalists aver, a fresh joint is added for every year of life, I judged that this one must have been at least fifteen years old.

Eulalie turned shudderingly away.

"Oh, it is frightful!" said she, resuming my arm; "but is it not strange that sweet music is said to appease them?"

"I begin to doubt it."

"Why?"

"This scaly devil approached you while you sang?"

"Thanks for the implied compliment, M. Oliver ; I hope you found my voice more musical than the serpent did ?"

"Its echo shall linger in my ears and heart for ever."

Madame coloured, and laughing said,—

"M. le Viscount de Chateaubriand (who writes so charmingly) told me, that three years ago, on the banks of the Genessee, in Upper Canada, he saw the anger of a most ferocious snake appeased by the music of a common flute on which was played "Vive Henri Quatre."

"Depend upon it, that snake must have been an aristocrat."

"True ; what music would have appeased a republican !"

"And now, madame, with a thousand grateful thanks for your——"

"Do not say kindness or hospitality, I beg of you."

"What then ?"

"Gratitude, if you will ; for I detest commonplaces," said she, casting down her fine eyes, over which their dark-fringed lids drooped with a charming expression of coquetry and timidity.

"Then, be it gratitude, Madame de Rouvigny."

"Call me Mazancy, Eulalie ; anything but that detested name !" said she, shrugging her pretty shoulders.

"I shall never forget the charm of your society, or the interest your unhappy story has created in my heart," said I, pressing her hand very gently.

"Every pleasure of our life is owing to some fortuitous circumstance," she replied, looking up with a beautiful smile. "Had *you* not rambled heedlessly towards Boscobelle last night, without knowing why ; had *I* not fallen asleep in the avenue, we had never known each other. 'Twas all a fatality which we could not see."

"Had I not under Providence saved you——"

"I had perished—yet what would it have mattered ? I

am an unfortunate creature ! No one can love me, who has the right to do so——”

“ Ah, madame—Eulalie,” said I, kissing her hand.

“ What says Marmontel ? ” said she, withdrawing it abruptly ; “ ‘ to confess that one does not love one’s husband, is almost to confess that we love *another* ; and the person who is made the confidant of such a confession, is very often the object of it, a cruel and dangerous deduction ! ’ ”

“ Dared I flatter myself that such was my case !——”

“ Oh, hush—*mon Dieu* ! we must not begin to speak thus, or where shall we *end* ? I fear you already begin to deem me hollow as a popo.”

“ As what ? ”

“ I forgot that you are a stranger here. The popo-tree bears hollow fruit, and here it is the symbol of insincerity.”

“ Ah, madame—may I never find such in you ! ”

“ People will never understand me—the victim of circumstances and destiny. My dear Mr. Oliver, you know not how *triste* is the fate of one like me, having a heart capable of all the love and affection one can feel—yet thrust back upon myself, that love and that affection have no legitimate object whereon to be lavished ; thus life becomes a dreary, dreary void ! ”

It was a perilous style for a pretty woman to adopt, in addressing an imaginative lad like me : we both became agitated and coloured deeply ; but madame was the first to recover herself.

“ Listen to me,” said she : “ I remember that M. Marmontel elsewhere says, ‘ We are naturally disposed to seek and to believe that we discover in the features of a man, what we know to be in his heart.’ I sought goodness and truth in yours, and I do believe that I love you——”

“ Love me—you ! ” I exclaimed.

“ As a *friend*—a dear friend, truly and well, but—but

leave me just now. Come in a day or two—I shall be at home—always at home to you, M. Oliver—I owe you so much, and I am so lonely here—oh, so lonely in heart and soul—for I have nothing to lean on—to cling to! adieu, monsieur.”

She presented her cheek ; but her manner, her beauty, the time, all conduced to bewilder me, and I pressed my lips to hers, by an impulse which I could not resist, and rushed from the avenue into the highway, with a speed that might have made any one suppose M. de Rouvigny was lurking, blunderbuss in hand behind the cabbage-trees.



CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MANGROVE CREEK.

I REACHED the garrison in time for guard-mounting, and the storm sufficiently explained the cause of my absence from quarters. I had ample time for thought during the monotony of that day's duty, when with a guard of twenty rank and file, including my comrade Tom Telfer (now a corporal), I had charge of various stores, powder, shot and live shells, which a gang of woolly-headed negroes were hoisting into the launch of H. M.'s frigate *Adder*, which was still anchored ahead of the leeward line, about a mile off in the bay, where all the fleet were preparing for the forthcoming attack upon the isle of Martinique.

During this important duty, which we superintended under a sunshine so hot that the barrels and bayonets of our firelocks actually grew warm in our hands, my mind

never for a moment ceased reverting to the pretty villa of Boscobelle, and the beautiful young Frenchwoman who dwelt in seclusion there.

Wearily I counted the hours till I could return.

Strict orders had been issued against permitting liquor to be given to soldiers on duty, but so much was I abstracted from all sublunary matters by the fair image of Eulalie de Rouvigny, and the whole tenor of my late adventure, that I was quite oblivious of the fact that some of my comrades were industriously "sucking the monkey," through the kind ministrations of two or three pretty mulatto girls. This monkey, was a cocoanut-shell filled with coarse rum, to be sucked at the end through the orifice, which represents the mouth of an ape. A discovery of this neglect might have caused me, in those days, to lose the three stripes from my arm, and to gain three hundred elsewhere, as intoxication when on duty, and more especially on foreign service, is a most serious military crime, and severely was it visited in those old times of the cat and halberds.

I could not conceal from myself, that ruin, misfortune, and the Revolution had combined to make Madame de Rouvigny somewhat of a philosopher. Then, circumstanced as we were,—she married to a man whom she hated, and might never see,—an exile from a country to which she could never return ; I, a Scots Fusilier, bound on a desperate service, in a torrid clime of fever and death. What secret impulse made me yield to the folly of being attracted or lured into an amour with her ? What end could it serve ?

I could not determine this. I was only eighteen ; and at that age one does not scrutinize too closely. It may be, that I was solely actuated by the resolution to enjoy life while it lasted ; as the volunteer of a forlorn hope, sells his kit and blanket, or spends his last sixpence in roistering at

the sutler's tent, lest it should become the prey of the plunderer who overhauls his corpse, or the pioneer who buries it.

There was no enthusiasm in my heart for Eulalie, because I could not deem her that which every lover deems his divinity to be,—perfection. I pitied her friendless condition; her beauty charmed and her manner won me. That was all. I could scarcely love, in the purest sense of the term, a woman who had yielded, even under terror of death, to a wretch, such as she had portrayed Thibaud de Rouvigny to be. Any regard I felt for her could not be lasting; and yet, so inconsistent is our nature, that I departed next day to visit her, quoting, as I left the barracks, the words of Rochefoucault, who says tritely, somewhere, “There are few people who are not ashamed of having loved one another *when that love ceases* ;” and with this cold aphorism in my heart, I hastened along the road to Boscobelle.

I found madame in her pretty little drawing-room: at the sight of her all scruples vanished, and I was vanquished by the charm of her presence and her beauty.

Previous to reaching the villa there occurred an incident which, though it seemed almost trivial at that time, was connected with some very important events.

The heat of the morning was oppressive; repeatedly I fanned my face with my forage-cap or the leaves of the large plants that grew by the highway. The cool umbrageous foliage of a thicket lured me to halt, to fling off my shoulder-belt and sword, and to lie for a time under the shadow of its intertwisted branches. This thicket clothed the steep sides of a gully, at the bottom of which rippled a long inlet, or arm of the sea. It was a lonely spot, haunted only by monkeys that leaped from tree to tree, and by tortoises that crawled upon the shelves of weedy rocks far down below me. The steep and volcanic rifts were covered by

wild gourd-vines and those Spanish lemon-trees which usually grow among rocks and stone. Arching over this watery avenue, the depth of which made it seem of inky hue, for the leaves excluded the sky, were the giant date-trees, with their fruit in spiral clusters, the pale-green cedar, the golden orange, and the calibash-tree, with its enormous gourds of the brightest yellow.

I had not been many minutes in this sequestered and luxuriant place before the sounds of voices and of oars fell upon my ear, and then a long, low, half-decked boat, built like an Indian piragua, with her mast, yard, and sail laid flat, shot into the mangrove creek. Three men who were in her laid their oars on board, and by their hands urged their craft along under the luxuriant foliage and mangroves which almost concealed the water whereon they floated, and the long, giant, and wonderful plants that grew upward from the oozy bottom, and were brushed by the keel as it cleft their wavy masses. As these three men passed below me, I could perceive that one was an old negro, the other was attired like a French priest, in a long black coat and shovel hat. The third, who was well armed with pistols and cutlass, notwithstanding a black beard, and the addition of a pair of rings in his ears, I could recognize by his villanous face, his brawny, bull-shaped neck, and his strange oaths, which stirred a terrible cord in memory, to be Dick Knuckleduster.

The Indian suddenly gave the piragua a lurch that nearly capsized it.

"Halloo, Quashi, Snowball, or whatever you call yourself!" bellowed Dick, "d——n your stupid optics! do you mean to send us all to kingdom-come in this stinking hole, all bilge and green leaves?"

"*Tonnerre de Ciel!*" added the priest fiercely; "mind what you are about, Monsieur Benoit le Noir, or I'll break every bone in your black skin!"

The priest I had no doubt was a French emigrant, but his language made me as doubtful of his sanctity as of his object, which was evidently a secret one, or why all this studious concealment ?

“ I do right, massa,” urged the old negro.

“ How should you know whether you do right or not ? ” growled the Frenchman ; “ what the devil are you ? ”

“ Me your slave, massa,” was the submissive and then common reply.

This strangely assorted trio, whose purpose I could not divine, passed close to me, or at least about twenty feet below my place of concealment ; and, assisted by the weeds and mangroves which they grasped, dragged their boat further up this watery gulley or chasm in the rock.

Having no desire to renew my acquaintance with Mr. Knuckleduster, who, no doubt, had deserted from one of our ships in the bay, as he and his two companions disappeared under the dwarf mangroves, I sprang up the bank, reached the highway, and hastened to the villa of Madame de Rouvigny.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE EMIGRANT PRIEST.

"BON JOUR, Oliver, mon ami!" she exclaimed, running trippingly towards me and holding out both her pretty hands; "I am glad you have returned so soon—but not sooner than welcome."

I was in a flutter like a young girl, so much did her beauty, and still more her charming and perfectly confident manner bewilder me. Her features were singularly delicate, and their varying play constituted, perhaps, their greatest charm. Her hair was black, soft, wavy, and in great quantity.

"I thank you, madame," said I, in a low voice.

"You have found no difficulty in returning?"

"We should never find a difficulty in returning to those we—we——"

"Esteem!" she suggested with an arch smile.

"Or love," said I courageously, closing my sentence.

She coloured deeply, and laughingly replied with that sentimental air which a pretty Frenchwoman can so readily assume,—

"*Grand merci!* Love—what is it? a spark of the divine essence—an emanation from God! It is an irresistible fatality—so Mademoiselle Karalio used to write—but *we* must not talk of it. And now for luncheon, and the coolest wines I can give you; for the allowance of the governor does enable me, though a poor French emigrant, to keep some very good wine for my visitors."

With my new friend, I spent a day of delight and pleasure amid the sylvan beauties of Boscobelle. During

heat of noon, we read together choice passages from the "Armida" of Collardeau, from the novels of Marivaux, and other fashionable but now forgotten novelists of the days of Marmontel ; and we were always amused by the plots of the latter (Marivaux), which he founded on what he termed "the surprise of love"—two persons conceiving a passion for each other without *knowing* it, until the last scene.

As the atmosphere cooled when the tropical eve came on, we walked together in the garden and coppices of Boscobelle ; Madame protected her head by a round straw hat and broad parasol ; and to me she consigned the care of her little Bologna spaniel. It was a privilege to have the care of this animal—the peculiar pet of a beautiful woman—the happy little cur, which lay in her lap nearly all day, and slept by night near the laced pillow on which her soft cheek rested—and which, when not in either place, reposed in her work-basket (a miracle of weaving, the gift of a poor Carib woman)—this little pug, which was the object of a thousand attentions and caresses, and was seldom out of her white hands even for five minutes.

She told me the names of various gigantic shrubs and gorgeous flowers, which, in size and luxuriousness, far exceeded the productions of Europe. I remember there was one named the poison-tree, the juice of which is said to cause blindness if it drops into the eye. It is graceful in its foliage, but the negroes fear it so much, that they deem even its shadow causes death ; and then we sat for hours in a beautiful arbour, concealed by dense hedges of damask and Provence roses, which flourish there all the year round, and shrouded still more by the water-lemon flowers that arched high overhead, and sprang from beds bordered by red and white lilies, St. Iago flowers, and the Merveille de Peru, which only opens its purple petals at sunset, and

thus, as madame told me, is named "the four o'clock flower." So hour after hour glided away, and I lingered there absorbed in the charms of her presence, the scene, and the time, forgetful that in a week hence, perhaps, I would again be ploughing the sea, in a ship crowded by armed men, bent on the slaughter of her countrymen.

At last the shadows of the tall cabbage-trees began to fall in long lines across the brilliant flower-beds, the green shrubbery and the distant fields of sugar-cane, warning me that night would approach with tropical rapidity, and that I must be gone.

Like one of those hours, the long voluptuous day had passed, and so I said in a low and tremulous voice, as I rose to leave Eulalie, for so I had already begun to name her.

"And you love me now," said she, in a breathless voice, permitting me still to retain her hands in mine; "it is so like a boy, this sudden fancy," she added, with a timid glance and a tender smile; "for despite your brown cheek, and your sub-officer's uniform, you are still but a boy, my dear Oliver. You love me, you say—or your eyes have said so, almost ere you know what love is."

"It is a tie between two dear hearts that seek to sympathize with each other—and beat and live for each other alone."

"But my heart, boy, tied as I am to another, is valueless as the fruit of the Dead Sea."

I clasped my hands, and said,—

"Speak not thus, Eulalie."

"How dare I offer—how dare you accept it?" she said, while her tears fell hot and fast.

"Dearest Eulalie," I whispered, placing a hand gently on each side of her waist, "I have it already—confess to me that I have."

“True.”

Her head fell on my breast, and I gave way to all the delight of the moment.

“Go, go,” she said, while deeply agitated; “leave me now; all this can end only in our own misery.”

As she spoke, the distant boom of an evening gun from a ship off the coast warned me that the sun had set; that I could have no storm to plead to-night as an excuse for absence from quarters; and, in the language of romancers, “I tore myself away,” and again took the nearest path to the garrison.

I hurried along immersed in thought. Regret that I had ever known Eulalie was my predominant reflection; yet, had I *not* known her,—had I not been cast by fate, fortune—what you will—in her path, she must have perished under the poisonous fangs of the reptile from which I rescued her. Then recalling her own remarkable words, that “love was an irresistible fatality,” I endeavoured to appease conscience and stifle regret, but in vain; and now I equally dreaded and longed for the order that would re-embark the Fusiliers for Martinique. In that conflict, which was inevitable, Rouvigny might fall, and she be freed from the snare which bound her to him,—but freed, to what end, to what purpose? Who was I—what was I! Poor, penniless; a soldier whose whole worldly possessions consisted of a knapsack and sixty rounds of ammunition. Amid all these reflections and mental queries, did no memory of Amy—dear, wee, modest Amy Lee—my boyish love, occur to me? I cannot tell now. It seemed as if there was no woman in the world but Eulalie.

The summit of a gentle eminence brought me in sight of Carlisle Bay, where our fleet, in all the pride of British men-of-war, rode at anchor in two long lines, astern of the towering three-decker of Sir John Jervis. They made a

gallant and a stately show, with yards squared and rigging taught as iron ; their scarlet ensigns and white pennants waving in the wind, and their black cannon peering grimly through the open ports. The dark blue water, the reflection of a clear blue sky, rolled in tiny ripples to the green copse wood or golden sand which edged the shore. A white foam, the precursor of sea breeze, was cresting every tiny wavelet that came into the lovely bay ; beyond the ample bosom of which the Caribbean sea spread in vast immensity away, till lost in distance, haze, and the purple glow of the set sun.

At a part of the path where the sugar-can es grew like a reedy wall on either hand, but still afforded a view of the anchored fleet, a person approached, in whom, at once, I recognised the priest, the companion of Dick Knuckleduster, and the negro, in the boat or piragua, that stole so secretly along the inlet, under the mangroves and calibash-trees. He approached a fallen tree on which I was seated, and, politely lifting his hat, bowed low, and bade me "good evening," in the purest French.

He seemed disposed to enter into conversation, but though his manner was suave and polite, his appearance was far from prepossessing. He was tall, broad-shouldered, and muscular. His head was set on a thick bull-neck, while the conformation of his square jaws, large ears, placed high and near his narrow temples, with a nose somewhat hooked yet flattened, gave him a fierce and tiger-like aspect ; which his keen sinister black eyes, and an old wound that traversed his forehead, in no way lessened or improved. He was closely shaved, but the roots of his black beard studded his chin with blue dots as if it had been scorched with powder sparks. I had—I knew not altogether why—an undefinable repugnance for, and a suspicion of, this clerical personage, who deliberately seated himself beside

me, on one of those fallen palms which one may frequently see after a storm in Barbadoes, where they seem then to take root at both ends and sprout with renewed vigour.

"Monsieur is a Frenchman?" said I.

"Monsieur le Soldat is right—I *am* a Frenchman."

"A rash admission at this time."

"Not for one of my mission in life," said he meekly.

"You are, I think, a priest?"

"Right again—I *am* a priest."

"An emigrant, of course."

"Hélas! M. le Soldat, yes; a fugitive," said he, bowing low.

"From old France?"

"No."

"Indeed!"

"I came last from Martinique."

"The deuce! from Martinique?" I exclaimed.

"Yes."

"Do you know, or have you seen the villain who commands in the town and citadel of St. Pierre?"

"The villain—St. Pierre!" he repeated, starting as he turned fully round towards me; "monsieur uses very strange language when speaking of a chef de bataillon in the service of the French republic."

"I mean a man named Thibaud de Rouvigny, formerly a sous lieutenant, who murdered his patron the Sieur de Mazancy, cruelly betrayed his daughter, and after placing himself at the head of the insurgents of the city and mutineers of the garrison, armed all the negro slaves and murdered the planters."

"Yes, monsieur, I have seen the Citizen De Rouvigny; but he has been superseded."

"Ah—indeed—by whom!"

"General Rochambeau—not superseded; but the general

being senior, in due course, assumes command of the Republican troops in the island. But now that I have answered your questions," he added, half closing and casting down his stealthy eyes, "can you inform me where the villa of Boscobelle is situated?"

"I can; but why do you ask?"

"I have news for Madame de Rouvigny — news from Martinique."

"Good news!" I inquired suspiciously.

"Why do *you* ask?" said he, through his clenched teeth.

"Because," said I, colouring, "we all feel a deep interest in her."

"*Sangbleu!* is that all? Well, I hope the tidings are good," he replied with a cold smile.

"Unless they be that her dog of a husband is dead, I don't know anything else that would interest her much from that island of revolt and crime."

"Well, monsieur," said he, with a sardonic grimace, "suppose that it were so?"

"That Rouvigny is dead!" said I, starting up.

"Moderate your transports, M. le Soldat," said the priest coldly, while grasping my arm with fingers like a vice, and while his eyes glared fiercely into mine. "This Thibaud de Rouvigny—this leader of the mob——"

"Who murdered the venerable Louis de Mazancy in cold blood—well—well—what of him?"

"Is sorely prostrated by a yellow fever, and may never recover."

"Good news for us."

"*Tonnerre de Ciel!*" grinned the priest, "and for all who love——"

"What?" I demanded furiously.

"Only the cause of royalty, monsieur," he replied, with an extremely low bow.

"We sail for your island in a short time."

"I hope your armament is strong."

"Oh, strong enough to eat up all the Frenchmen in the Antilles," replied I, with true British confidence.

"*Bon Dieu!* Your strength?"

"We have twelve or fourteen battalions of the line, three three-deckers, six frigates, some of them double-banked, and transports without end."

"How many soldiers, think you?"

"About fifteen thousand," said I gaily.

"And seamen, how many?"

"Rather more than half that number."

"*Vive le Roi!* the tricolor must certainly go to the wall. How many pieces of cannon?"

"I know not," said I, fearing that I had already been too communicative to a stranger.

"Madame Rouvigny has been very useful to your government, I believe?" said he, with the air of one who makes a casual inquiry.

"Oh, exceedingly so; her information concerning Martinique and Guadaloupe has proved invaluable to the general and admiral—at least, so rumour says."

"Ah!" said he, with a French grimace; "and her Boscobelle——"

"Lies there," said I, pointing to it.

"Where?"

"Amid yonder tall cabbage-trees that tower above the sugar-canes."

"Thank you, M. le Soldat," said he, raising his hat.

"Adieu, M. l'Abbé."

We bowed, and separated.

"What the deuce can this grim and ugly padre want with Eulalie?" thought I, while hurrying along. "And so her husband is ill—dying of yellow fever; *bon voyage* to

you, M. le Chef de Bataillon!" added I, while some very brilliant ideas occurred to me.

After we were a mile or two apart, and I was close to the garrison, the main guard of which were closing the gates for the night, I remembered again the suspicious manner in which I had first seen this priest in the mangrove creek ; his strange bearing, his companionship with Knuckleduster, his questions and my unwary answers,—all rushed upon me, with a flood of alarming suggestions and vague terrors of his secret purpose and real character ; but it was too late to do anything for that night.

On entering the fortress, its gates were closed behind me, and as a sequel to my unpleasant thoughts, Sergeant Drum-birrel informed me, that the general order for the whole forces to embark on the third day ensuing, *at latest*, had been issued ; and thus I knew, that in a few hours Eulalie and the Barbadian shore would be far behind me, for ever.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE SPY.

NEXT day, the garrison at Needham's Point ; the white-tented camp upon the flat green shore ; the stately fleet in the bay ; and all the harbour of Bridgetown, the mole and the carenage, presented a scene of unwonted bustle, while a thousand boats were dashing to and fro, with their broad-bladed oars flashing in the sunshine ; many had the scarlet ensign flaunting at the stern. Amid them were launches and piraguas manned by negro slaves, conveying stores, ammunition, orders, provisions, and all the requisite material for the arduous service on which we were so soon to depart.

Various duties detained me at head-quarters until the heat of noon was past, when I hastened to pay a visit to Eulalie—a visit which I felt painfully conscious would be my last, as the Fusiliers would be one of the first corps probably to embark.

The conviction that in France, or in its colonies, I could not have had such free meetings with Eulalie, lent our friendship an additional charm.

"Courtship and marriage in France," says a recent writer, truly, "are surrounded by so many forms, that it may be doubted whether the original legislators did not consider them a sort of *crime*, and it may also be doubted whether the difficulties with which they are surrounded have not had their expressive social consequences."

My acquaintance with Eulalie savoured of the romantic, and I dearly loved all that had the air of adventure, such being more valuable to me then, than all the gold of Australia—"Ormuz and Inde" are out of fashion now. The

piquancy of her foreign manner, the luxuriance of the country, the softness of the climate, and the novelty of our situations, predisposed us to regard each other with a tender interest, which was strengthened by her horror of her deceiver, Rouvigny.

I had such an undefined dread of the priest who accosted me, yesterday, that on hastening down the tall "cabbage walk" towards the villa, when I saw its white walls and green blinds, its verandah covered by lemon-water flowers, and Provence roses, all in their usual state of repose, and no sign of alarm or dismay about the place, I experienced a relief at heart, and gaily knocked at the door. A few minutes after found me by the side of my charming French friend, who was as gay and smiling,—as full of alternate sentimentalism and *espièglerie* as ever, until I crushed her vivacity by announcing our speedy departure.

"For Martinique?" she exclaimed.

"Yes; and for St. Lucia, Guadaloupe, and all the Leeward Isles in succession."

"Alas! what dangers are before you,—war and fever by sea and land; we shall never meet more, M. Oliver! Our term or little time of joy is past!" she exclaimed, with clasped hands.

I then inquired about the priest,—the bearer of tidings from St. Pierre. She seemed astonished, and declared that no such person had been at Boscobelle.

"Strange," said I, and then related the two occasions on which I had seen him; first, in the mangrove creek, and secondly on the highway where we had conversed near the fallen palm-tree.

"*Grand Dieu!* this is most singular," exclaimed Eulalie, her large dark eyes dilating with wonder; "do me the favour to describe his appearance."

In as few words as possible I did so; and while she

listened she grew very pale ; her eyes filled with an expression of terror, and she exclaimed, with a piercing accent,—

“ ’Tis Thibaud de Rouvigny you have met ! ”

“ Rouvigny—impossible ! ”

“ Nothing wicked or adventurous is impossible to this man,” she answered mournfully.

“ He here——”

“ And disguised, too.”

“ What can his mission be ? ”

“ To spy upon your forces,—perhaps to compass my life.”

“ Eulalie, dear Eulalie ! he *did* ask many questions concerning you.”

“ Oh, Heavens ! then I am lost ! Oliver, do not leave me at this crisis.”

“ He dare not approach you, while under the protection of the British flag.”

“ There it is—*mon Dieu !* that is my crime. Envious, malignant, subtle, and vindictive, Heaven and his own heart can only tell his present object ; but be assured he has not lost sight of me. Alas ! you know him not, as I so fatally know him ; and thus, you cannot conceive the deep-laid plans and carefully-developed cruelty of which he is capable. Rouvigny here—even here ! Then again I am a prey to terror, to mistrust, and to misery. But *you*, Oliver—you will not, *must* not leave me,” she added, clinging to me in undisguised fear and desperate hope.

I gazed upon her beautiful face, her upturned and soft beseeching eyes, and the orders of the general seemed to be written in letters of fire before me. I could only press her to my breast and remain silent.

“ You mentioned a negro being in the boat with him ? ” said she.

"A negro, whom he named Benoit."

"Benoit le Noir?"

"Yes, Eulalie."

"My father's old slave, who tended me in prison and assisted me to escape from St. Pierre, and who afterwards became the property of Rouvigny. A fresh corroboration that this pretended priest is my tormentor."

"Had I but known this yesterday, the rope of the provost marshal's guard would have made short work with the spy."

"Ah! *Mère de Dieu!* Do not talk so; for this man's life is indissolubly connected with mine."

"Some friendly ball, at present lying quietly in an ammunition-cask, may break the spell, Eulalie."

She covered her face with her tremulous white hands, and sobbed heavily.

I shall not occupy time in relating how unavailing, by the pressure of necessity, were the tears and entreaties of Eulalie, that I should remain for her protection, or how graceful were the prayers she put up for my safety, when she found that I must leave her; and how charming were the whispered promises, that whatever fate had in store for her, she would write to me often—oh, very often, and remember me for ever; that she would keep a little journal of all her lonely thoughts, and on each anniversary of her patroness, St. Ursule, she would say a novena, or nine-days prayer, for me and my prosperity. Poor Eulalie!

Her earnest words, her musical accents, her tender expression, and the chaste features of her pale, sad face, sank deeply into my memory, as I kissed her on the lips and eyes; and we parted, both in tears, for I was still but a boy.

Years have passed since then, and many more may pass, but I never shall forget the hours of delight that I spent with the unfortunate Eulalie.

I hurried from the villa, and almost ran towards the

town ; but as the distance increased between us, my steps became slower, and, from every little eminence, I gazed regretfully back to the lofty cabbage-palms and the orange-groves of Boscobelle, all darkening now, and deepening in the rapid twilight of a tropical evening in March. The white walls of the villa had disappeared amid the sombre foliage ; but I knew that *she* was there, where I might never be again.

At last I reached the fallen palm by the way-side, where, yesterday, the priest, or the disguised Rouvigny, had met me, and there again I turned to take a farewell glance.

Boscobelle and its groves were alike lost in darkness now ; but soon my heart throbbed with a new anxiety, on beholding the glow of a conflagration, tinting all the calm sky with red and orange-coloured flame, and throwing forward in black and strong outlines several intervening objects, and this alarming light seemed to rise from Boscobelle ! I gazed on it, wavering, irresolute, and almost trembling with anxiety. My limbs faltered, and I nearly made a retrograde movement, when the deep boom of a heavy gun, whether from the garrison or the fleet I know not, pealed through the echoing sky, and died in distance far away, recalling me to a sense of duty ; and I hastened to Needham's Point, where we spent our last night in Barbadoes, as an express order had come for the troops to embark on the morrow.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ANXIETY.

THE sun was yet far below the horizon of a sea that, like the sky above it, presented a purity of blue, which still, on each successive morning, excited the wonder of the European, when, by beaten drum and the ringing Kentish bugle in camp and fort, and all along the echoing shore, the various corps of Sir Charles Grey's army were roused from slumber, and summoned to their colours ; while, on a gun being fired from the ship of Admiral Jervis, all the boats of the fleet shot off simultaneously, to convey them on board.

I have already mentioned that the *Adder* frigate lay nearest to the shore in the leeward line ; thus we, the Fusiliers, were on the extreme left flank, when drawn up on the beach for embarkation.

Already our restless fellows had forgotten their long sea-voyage ; already they were tired of garrison routine, and longed to be at the enemy. After three hearty cheers, we departed from the fort to the beach in heavy marching order, with our band playing and colours cased ; and forming close column, halted ; then, by successive companies, we were embarked in the boats of the *Adder*.

Fifteen thousand men were there under arms—their bayonets flashing in the sun. A few years after, and what had war and pestilence left of all that glittering host ? Hecatombs of rotten bones, when the roll of their “ spirit-stirring drums ” was lost in the silence of their graves by sea and shore ; for Rochambeau and Rouvigny, who commanded in Martinique, and Ricard in St. Lucia, with Victor

Hughes in Guadaloupe, were all skilful and resolute officers, who promised to give us pretty hot work before we could add these isles to the empire of the Queen of the Sea.

Glendonwyn's company was in rear of our columns, and from its other supernumeraries I stood somewhat apart, and full of my own sad reflections, gazing abstractedly on the exciting scene, the brilliance of which surpassed all I had conceived, as the cloudless sun arose in all his glory from the West-Indian sea ; while each long and sharp-prowed boat, crowded with red-coats, its flashing oars moving with the regularity of some vast and many-footed monster, cleft the clear water of the bay. The brass bands were all playing, and cheers were ringing incessantly along the sunny shore, and on board the armed fleet. The scene was, indeed, most glorious and inspiring ; but I thought only of the sad young Frenchwoman, of the sorrowful story she had told me of her hopeless future, and the hours of delight we could never spend together again.

Under Captain Macdonald, of Kinlochmoidart, our first company had already embarked, and the column was closing up, when an aiguilleted officer, who wore a brilliant staff uniform, and whom I knew to be Lieutenant Harry Smith, of the Scots Royals, and aide-de-camp to Sir Charles Grey, rode hurriedly up to the Earl of Kildonan.

" My lord," I heard him say, " I have a message to you from the general."

" An invitation to a Barbadian breakfast, eh ?" replied our colonel laughing, as he patted the curving neck of his beautiful black horse ; " champagne, coffee, ham, and guava jelly ; pine-apples, citron, and limes."

" Nothing half so pleasant," said the handsome young aide smiling ; " but we require twenty rank and file of your Fusiliers for immediate duty."

" At the moment of embarkation ! an odd request."

"We want them without delay, by desire of his excellency the governor."

"You will have the goodness to explain."

"Nearly the whole garrison are employed at the boats or on fatigue parties to day, and he requires one officer and twenty Fusiliers for a few hours. They will be back ere the last company is embarked."

"And this duty?"

"An outrage of a dreadful nature was committed last night, a few miles from Bridgetown."

"Where?" asked the earl.

"At a villa named Boscobelle."

My heart died within me at these terrible words; but restrained by etiquette and by that force of habit which discipline impels, I dared not speak; but the *memory* of the shock these words gave me still vibrates in my heart.

"Indeed!" exclaimed the earl.

"Madame de Rouvigny," continued the aide-de-camp, in the most easy and conversational way, "a French emigrant lady—and, by the bye, a devilish pretty woman—has been carried off in the night——"

"Carried off!"

"Or murdered; we know not which, as her body cannot be found, and her residence has been burned to its foundation."

I leave the reader to imagine how these dreadful tidings chilled my heart.

"Murdered—carried off—a lady!" reiterated the earl.

"Yes—deuced unpleasant affair," yawned the staff officer, of whom I have more to relate elsewhere.

"By whom?"

"Runaway negroes—Caribs in their piraguas—perhaps by pirates, or French privateersmen—by whom we know not; but as it is thought they may still be lurking in the

cane-fields or thickets, some twenty rank and file of yours—all active fellows—are wanted to scour the bush thereabout. Please to detail them at once, my lord; they will not be long detained.”

“Instantly,” exclaimed the earl, wheeling round his horse.

“I know this place called Boscobelle, my lord—permit me to go?” I asked breathlessly.

“Certainly, Ellis; you’re a smart lad,” said the earl; “and I like to find a soldier always ready.”

How little could our colonel fathom the cause of my readiness and anxiety—my burning impatience to be gone!

Old Glendonwyn gave Lieutenant Haystone the right section of our company; we threw off our knapsacks, haversacks, canteens, blankets, and all that might impede us. I relinquished my sergeant’s pike for a musket. We loaded with ball-cartridge, and thus, under my guidance, twenty of the Fusiliers went off, double-quick, towards that place so well known to me, the residence of Eulalie.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A REVELATION.

THE fleetest railway speed would have seemed slow to me as we hastened towards the scene of last night's outrage. It was soon reached, and as we hurried down the avenue of cabbage-trees we became sensible that the odour of burned wood, canes, and bamboo, predominated over all the fragrance of the herbs and flowers with which the morning air was laden. An exclamation of mingled rage and sorrow escaped me on beholding the site of the once pretty cottage or villa.

The verandah and porch, the wooden columns and cane trellis-work of which had been covered by luxuriant masses of lemon-water flowers and the ever blooming roses of Provence, had all disappeared; so had the white wooden walls and broad, green Venetian blinds. A few blackened stumps that stood among heaps of mouldering cinders were all that remained of the home of poor Eulalie.

And where was she?

The garden and avenue were strewn by broken pictures, music, volumes of Marivaux, Racine, Molière and Madame de Genlis, thrown out by the negro servants, a few of whom sat near the smoking ruin, crouching on their hams, and regarding us with such fear and doubt that some time elapsed before we could get any explanation from them.

At last Lieutenant Haystone contrived to glean from Quashi the Coremantee, who seemed less terrified than the rest, that they had been startled at nightfall by the shriek of a woman and the crashing of glass. On this they all trem-

bled very much, believing it the white devil of the buccra men, who always comes when there is thunder, and the heavy wind that bends and uproots the big palms ; but, gathering courage, after a time they hastened to the room of their mistress. It was empty ! her bed was in disorder—the furniture overthrown—a Venetian window dashed to pieces, and portions of her night-dress adhering to the fragments evinced that she had been roughly dragged through it, and across the garden, footsteps being discernible on the trampled flower-beds. These led them towards the avenue, from searching which the sable domestics were recalled by an alarm of fire, and on returning found the whole villa in flames. It burned rapidly. Quashi could tell us no more—an Obeah nigger might, but there was no Obeah at Boscobelle just now.

Previous to our arrival, I related to Haystone and my comrades some of the circumstances connected with my visits to the villa, dwelling particularly on my two meetings with the supposed priest.

“ You should have reported all this to head-quarters,” said Haystone, “ then perhaps this outrage might have been prevented.”

“ True,” said I sadly ; “ I know not what impulse led me to conceal circumstances so full of suspicion ; but ’tis useless to reproach me now.”

“ Our orders are to search the woods and sugar-plantations ; you will extend from the right, and separate by files. The fallen palm on the high road shall be our point of rendezvous in half an hour hence. Make prisoner every suspicious-looking person——”

“ But,” said one of the fusiliers, “ in case of resistance ? ”

“ Give them a prick with your bayonet—we have no time to lose here. Away, then.”

We separated by twos, and while some dived at once into

the long green masses of waving sugar-canes, others into palm, orange, or chestnut-groves, I, with the assistance of my Coromantee friend, endeavoured to trace further the footsteps he had detected on the flower-beds ; but, alas ! all vestiges of them disappeared on the gravel of the avenue. We searched long without discovering any other clue. My soul was heavy, and my heart sick to death. I heard my comrades shouting and laughing as they met each other at intervals in the bush, and envied their heedless fun as they pelted with stones or fallen nuts the chattering monkeys which sprang from tree to tree, and in turn mocked and jibed them, or swung by their claws and tails from the branches.

Suddenly, the old Coromantee (some of whose former savage instincts were here of service) detected among the long thick grass that grew by the wayside, beyond the "cabbage-walk," traces of feet and of the leaves being crushed, as if some one had been dragged over the ground there, and keenly he followed this clue or trail. Here a bruised blade of grass, there a broken twig of the wild tamarind, or a crushed gourd-vine, served to lead him on ; and from point to point he traced them, with his gleaming eyes and his flat, red, dilated nostrils close to the earth, as if he scented footsteps like a Spanish blood-hound, till all clue vanished again at the deep gully in the mangrove creek, where I had seen the piragua of the pretended priest, guided under the luxuriant weeds and wild palm-branches to its place of concealment.

The Coromantee pointed to the black weedy profundity of the water below us, and was silent. The place and his action filled my mind with vague but terrible suggestions.

I knew not what to decide upon, and stood by his side, leaning on my musket, bewildered by grief for the mystery that overhung the fate of Eulalie. Suddenly a shout above roused me ! It was the cheerful voice of Tom Telfer.

"Ahoy," cried he. "Hallo, Ellis,—look out—stop that fellow!"

Having descended far into the gully, I looked up, and saw a man pursued by several of the Fusileers. He and they came plunging down the steep and rocky side of the wooded chasm, through thick mangroves, and a literal jungle of twisted creepers, of wild vines, cucumbers, gourds, and ginger-roots, all flourishing in matted masses, under a shade so dark, that the wild tamarinds kept their leaves closed, as at night.

"Fire, Oliver, fire!" cried Tom, as the fugitive, who seemed like a seaman, drew a pistol from his girdle and discharged it full at my head; but I had already levelled my bayonet at him breast-high, and in my bewilderment at the same time, discharged my musket, the bullet of which whistled past his left ear. The two reports, as they rang in that deep and narrow gorge, woke a thousand reverberations, scaring from the trees the brown monkeys, the white sea-gulls who were lured there by the solitude, and clouds of little humming-birds, with their tiny pinions of crimson, gold, and emerald green. Fortunately, the fugitive's bullet missed me, and before he could cock a second pistol, I had knocked him down with my clubbed musket.

On his being collared and roughly dragged to his feet by Tom Telfer and a few others, I found myself confronted by my old acquaintance Mr. Richard Knuckleduster.

"We found him lurking under some broken palm-branches, a little way up the gulley," said Tom, breathlessly; "he bolted as soon as he saw us——"

"Ah, that looked suspicious."

"And so, Ellis, we gave chase."

"He is one of the very men we are in search of," said I; "and I know him to be a murderer, a thief, and a deserter from the service. Bring him to Mr. Haystone, and if he

makes the slightest resistance, bayonet him without mercy."

We soon dragged him to the highway, and at the fallen palm, found Lieutenant Haystone seated, with his jacket unbuttoned, a cigar in his mouth, and in his hand a large plaintain leaf, with which he was fanning himself, as the atmosphere was now close and sultry.

"Hallo—a prisoner!" said he, starting up.

"We roused him in the gully, sir," said Telfer, as our party all came rapidly in; "and Ellis says that he knows him well."

"Is this the case, sergeant?" asked the officer.

"It was he whom I saw in the piragua, accompanied by the Frenchman and negro. I know him, moreover, to be a deserter, a robber, and perhaps worse."

Knuckleduster bestowed on me a savage scowl, and then burst into a fit of gruff and contemptuous laughter.

"Come, sirrah," said Haystone, "this insolent bearing will not better your prospects; remember that a court-martial and the lash are before you, so answer me in a straightforward manner. Know you aught of the persons who committed the outrage last night at Boscobelle?"

"Yes," replied the ruffian, grinding his fanglike teeth, "and may every danger dog them in this world with damnation in that to come—if so be, as the parsons say, there is another."

"A charitable wish!" said Haystone; "if this spirit animates you, we may perhaps arrive at the truth."

"Perhaps," sneered the ruffian.

"Then who were they?"

"Well, I suppose I may as well make a clean breast of it. They were Frenchmen from Martinique."

"And you served them?"

"Poor devils must do queer things sometimes."

"You—a deserter?" continued Haystone furiously.

"I defy you or any man to prove that I deserted," said the fellow sullenly. "I was lying out on the foreyard-arm of the admiral's ship, in a night when it was blowing a stiff breeze, and we were ordered to reef topsails. I fell away to leeward and dropped into the sea, when we were close to St. Lucia. The ship never lay-to, but the lieutenant of the watch tossed a hen-coop over to me, and with its aid I got ashore and was made prisoner by the Johnnie Crapauds, as you might have been had the misfortune been yours. But I was a pressed man, and no doubt may be marked as having *run* on the purser's books. I was sent in irons to Martinique. There a French officer, whose wife was a prisoner here, stated that he wished to set her free, though, as I have since thought, it was to punish her, as an enemy of the Republic and a spy of the British Government, for I had heard she had become both."

"The Colonel de Rouvigny?" said I.

"Yes, that is his name. He promised to pay me handsomely, if I, with a few others, would work a little schooner, *Les Droits de l'Homme*, from St. Pierre to Barbadoes. I hoped to make my escape and volunteered to serve him. She was a queer craft we manned; low in the water, with raking masts, a fast sailer; painted white on one side and black on the other, for she had been fitted out by some of the pirates on the Spanish main. Howsoever, it seemed better to be aboard o' her, than to work like a slave among French niggers at the new batteries of St. Pierre. We reached Barbadoes. The schooner, with American colours flying, came to an anchor in a lonely bight about six miles off; but kept close in shore among the weeds and dwarf mangroves; and then we—that is, Monsieur Rouvigny, three negroes, and I—came off here, in a kind of punt, they call a piragua.

"Three negroes," said I; "there was but one with you—old Benoit le Noir."

"The others were squatted under the plaintains at the mouth of the gully."

"Well—proceed."

"If the colonel got clear off with his pretty wife, I was to get a hundred francs and my liberty; but I got mightily disgusted with his French lingo—his parleyvooving and his hat-off nonsense, which we Englishmen never like——"

"*We*—speak for yourself Mr. Knuckleduster," said Haystone.

"I wish to tell you all about it, just as it happened."

"How delightfully disengenuous!" said Haystone, with contempt; "though we cannot place over-much reliance on what a scoundrel so thorough-bred may tell, fire-away."

I was on thorns as it were, until the fellow with provoking slowness continued his story. With all his ignorance and brutality of disposition, he was sufficiently acute to perceive how his narrative wrung my heart. He smiled and grimaced as he resumed, and this, in the meantime, was his revenge on me for twice capturing him.

"For two or three days we hung about the villa, hiding in the shrubberies and among the sugar-canes, without finding a good opportunity for nabbing the lady, as she always kept close inside, or if she did come out, was always attended by an old Coromantee nigger, or by our friend the sergeant here——"

"What—by *you* Ellis?" exclaimed Haystone, with such surprise that he nearly dropped his cigar.

"Rascal!—you saw me then?" said I.

"Ay—morning, noon, and night. Pretty often Monsieur Rouvigny and I have been within arm's length of you, when you and she used to sit in the garden bower, with your arms round each other, reading books in the French lingo,

chattering like two monkeys on a cabbage-tree, or cater-wauling to the banjo—guitar I s'pose you call it ; and it was as much as I could do to keep him from pistolling you both outright, while he swore and *sacréd* like fury, for he is a desperate fierce thief, that colonel. Last night, when his patience became exhausted, and mine too for the matter o' that, he resolved to make a dash for the prize ! Mounseer knew where Madame's bedroom lay on the ground-floor. He found her green blinds unfastened. We crept in and found her snug in her berth asleep. I drew back the curtains, and very pretty she looked with her black hair all braided smoothways round her head, under a dainty bit of nightcap—far too pretty to be the wife of a Frenchman, say I. But now, the word was presto !

“ We dragged her from bed—then she shrieked out ; but I took the bandanna from my neck, and tied it over her mouth. One of our niggers stupidly smashed a window with his woolly head, and created an alarm ; so, to make a diversion, and enable us to get clear off, the colonel threw the night lamp into the lady's bed, and, in a twinkling, set the curtains, the room, and the house in a blaze ! We dragged her out of the window in her night-dress, across the flowers and bushes, and carried her off bodily on our shoulders along the highway, till we reached the gully, where the piragua lay moored under the mangroves. The poor thing was silent now, and offered no resistance, when she found *whose* prisoner she was. My eyes ! she seemed to have a woeful terror of that man. He too, was silent, or only *sacréd*, and twisted his thick upper lip where the hair was shaven off, when he disguised himself as a French parson at St. Pierre.

“ We put her on board the piragua ; the colonel and his three niggers jumped in ; I was about to follow, for, look you, I had not been paid a stiver of the hundred francs.

and began to fear that after this affair the climate of Barbadoes might prove too hot for me ; but what think you the infernal treacherous frog-eater did ? He clubbed a pistol and struck me down senseless among the mangroves. Then they shoved off and pulled away to seaward to reach his schooner, which was hull-down when I saw her this morning about daybreak, and bearing away north-and-by-west. Here, among the mangroves I lay until you fellows found me. This is all my story—a pretty one aint it, Master Oliver Ellis ?”

“ For what purpose did the Frenchman carry off his wife in this outrageous manner ? ” asked Mr Haystone.

“ To punish her for levanting from him and for becoming, as he said, a spy.”

“ Punish,” said I anxiously ; “ but how ? ”

“ By heaving her overboard, with a cold shot at her heels, or by marooning her on some rock—there are lots o’ them among the Windward Isles, where the bones of the marooned may lie for years, as white as coral. I have seen them myself many times in these here Indian isles and in others up the Gulf of Florida, where they have lain since the days of the old Buccaneers, when Captain Kidd sailed in his frigate, the *Vulture*—ay, damme, that I have ! The colonel often spoke of serving her so, if he found a bit of convenient rock far out at sea with nothing on it but a coating of guano, seaweed, and barnacles, and, mayhap, a petrel or two perching atop of it, and there leaving her to die—for he swore she should have a terrible end—and he is just the man to give her one. Now that I have payed out all my yarn, hand over hand, without any rigmarole or nonsense, what do you mean to do with me ? ”

“ Send you on board the ship of Admiral Jervis,” said Haystone, who ordered him to be secured by a musket-sling.

We marched hastily back to the sea-beach, and delivered up our prisoner to a party of marines from the admiral's ship.

After the dreadful story I had heard, how terrible were the thoughts that crowded on me !

I pictured in fancy poor Eulalie in the power of this merciless Frenchman and his callous negroes, flung, pinioned, into her watery grave, and sinking without a hand to save her—sinking to sleep, far down amid the oozy and mysterious depths of that hot sea, where flourish a myriad of giant plants that almost reach its surface—and as she sank perhaps becoming, ere dead, a prey to the horrid shark. But even these ideas were less terrible and less agonizing than the awful thought of her perishing miserably on a lonely rock—marooned—to die alone, unseen, unwept-for—to die of hunger and thirst—of horror and despair !

Thus wrath and just vengeance filled my heart, as the *Adder* squared her yards, and the whole of that crowded and magnificent fleet sailed out of Carlisle Bay, and bore up for Martinique.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A SEA OF FIRE.

WE sailed from Barbadoes about sunrise on the morning of the 3rd of March, and sternly I rejoiced that the distance between us and the land of our conquest and, as I hoped, of retribution, was so short.

All were now on board again, and as we left Carlisle Bay and gained the open sea, the cheers we exchanged rang merrily from ship to ship. Bridgetown, with its little spires, the windmills, the mole and forts, disappeared, as the bay seemed to close its arms, and the undulating line of coast diminished to a low dark streak, when evening found us again ploughing the sea of gold and azure, with the bright-hued dolphin dashing through the brine, and the silver-scaled flying-fish springing like a work of enchantment, from wave to wave :—

A feeble thing,
With brine still dropping from its wing,
Just sparkling in the solar glow,
To plunge again in depths below.

We had a fair wind, and by lying well to the westward, saw the fading rays of the setting sun gild the two high and conical hills of St. Lucia—the Pitons—which are covered from the beach to their summits with the greenest foliage ; but these darkened and seemed to melt away as the cloudless sun went down beyond the burning sea, while afar off on our larboard quarter a crimson gleam shot at times across the horizon. It came from the flaming crater of La Soufrière in St. Lucia, where clouds of burning alum, sulphur, and cinders are hourly spouted to the sky.

I was detailed for the middle watch, and, apart from all, trod to and fro on the lee-side of the main-deck, full of my own thoughts ; for at such a solitary time they came thick and fast upon me—memories of the lost Eulalie—of my mother's quiet home, and fancies of the dangers that were now before me, and which every day became more imminent.

St. Lucia had faded into the sea astern.

It was not without emotions of strange and undefinable interest, that I gazed upon those isles and the ocean that washed their burning shores. My memory was filled with stories of Raleigh ; of Vasco de Gama, who doubled the haunted Cape of Storms ; of Nunez de Balboa, who, clad in his armour, toiled in search of the long fabulous Southern Sea ; of Kidd, the daring pirate, of the early navigators, of the old buccaneers, of marooned men and the savage Caribs, who roasted and devoured their prisoners. For these isles of modern wealth and slavery were the ancient arena of battle, storm, and wild adventure, where sunken wrecks laden with golden doubloons and silver dollars, were lying in many a bight and bay ; where fables said that treasures buried in the sand were guarded by the spirits of murdered men ; where olive-coloured mermaids whilom sat upon the rocks and sandy keys, luring mariners to destruction, even as the syrens did in the classic days of old. Such scenes and stories were always associated in my mind with memories of Selkirk and Robinson Crusoe, who, in my boyish dreams, I was wont to consider a very happy fellow indeed in having, as some one says, "a whole island all to himself ;" but of this kind of happiness the reader will hear more at a future time.

I remember we passed a lonely little isle, whereon a Spanish hermit had dwelt for years, subsisting on fruit, fish, and tortoises. His dwelling was constructed with the bones

of a stranded whale ; and a large wooden cross, which he had toiled to erect as a landmark from the sea, could still be discerned through our telescopes. But to resume.

The night was soft, and the atmosphere, even at that distance from the land, possessed the warmth and perfume peculiar to the tropics and to the isles of the Antilles. The heat of the air was tempered by the breeze that swept over the rolling waves from shores laden with the fragrance of fruit and spices, that had basked the livelong day under the sun of a cloudless sky.

The watch on deck was numerous ; but in a large frigate it was easy to seclude oneself and give way to reverie. In the clear light of the stars, her cloud of snowy canvas swelled out upon the breeze, and as she rolled slightly on each successive billow, the reef-points on the full white bosom of every shadowy sail waved slowly to and fro like silken fringes.

To windward lay the long line of the fleet—each ship following the other in silence, like white and noiseless spectres of vast stature, gliding over the solemn sea ; and no light was visible now, save the red spark of a lantern at the mainmast-head of the admiral's stately three-decker.

As we proceeded, the sea began gradually to assume a very remarkable appearance.

Gradually, the wake of every ship—that long white path of boiling foam which seems to run astern, became a line of apparent fire—alternately brilliant and lurid, then pale and ashy in hue. This increased rapidly, till every ridge of water became a dancing line of red light—every wave a crimson cone, based with emerald green, till gradually the whole sea around the ship became a sheet of seeming fire. Amid this, gigantic monsters, wavering and misshapen in form, gleamed terribly as they shot past in pursuit of each other.

These were merely *fishes* and animalculæ which were thus

magnified by the effect of this wonderful phenomenon. Every rope that trailed overboard was covered with flaming light. Flames seemed also to adhere to the ships' sides, and the spray that flew over their bows and cat-heads, seemed sparks of living fire.

The wonder and beauty of this terrible scene drew exclamations of astonishment from all who were on deck ; but after we had sailed a few knots further, the sea of light gradually faded away, and long ere the night-watch were piped down, the waves that rolled around our armament, seemed by contrast darker than ever.

This afforded great matter for speculation among the seamen and Fusiliers of the middle watch ; and it was in vain that I endeavoured to explain the theories of the phosphorescent or luminous sea, by describing the light-emitting faculties of the myriads of animalculæ, fish, and slimy substances that float in its depths ; for an old tar, who was a great authority on all matters pertaining to salt water, in H.M.S. *Adder*, asserted on his "solemn davy 'twarnt no such thing—but was a spell laid on the water in these here parts in the old times by some buccaneer, whose ship had been burned after plundering a church in St. Lucia, and had gone down with all hands on board, and in flames of fire to the bottom of the sea, where she would continue to burn till the day of judgment, when we would all be piped out of our graves, on deck."

CHAPTER XL.

THE LANDING.

WE had a noble run, for the wind continued fresh and fair, we never lifted tack or sheet the whole way, and one morning I was roused early by the announcement that Martinique was in sight. This was on the morning of the 5th of March.

I hastened on deck and could distinctly see the Cardinal's Cap, the most lofty hill in the isle of St. Martin (and a good landmark for mariners) ascending slowly from a sea empurpled by the yet unrisen sun. Since we had left Carlisle Bay, no sail, save the fleet, had been visible. I thought of Rouvigny, whose fleet schooner *Les Droits de l'Homme* could not be many hours ahead of us—if indeed, he had shaped his course to Martinique—and I hailed the rising land with a glow of stern hope.

As the fleet drew nearer to the shore, two other mountains became visible—the highest being Mont Pelee, a dormant volcano, as lofty as Ben Nevis. It is covered with dark copsewood the density of which attracts the clouds, and from its steep sides innumerable streams descend to water the broad savannahs, where the yellow canes of Java and Tahiti were waving in the breeze, and those fertile fields where coffee, cassia, cotton, and maize are cultivated. Savannah is an old Spanish word, signifying a plain as smooth and level as a *sheet*.

The race of Caribs in Martinique had long since been totally exterminated; but stories of them, preserved in the voyages of the Buccaneers and the wars of the Spaniards,

invested with a species of romance the conical hills of the island, as they rose, higher, greener, and more defined from sea. In the "Excellent Treatise of Antonio Galvano," which contains a history of navigation from the floating of the Ark to his own time in 1555, we are told that the "Caribees are good warriors, who shoot well with the bow; but they poison their arrows with an herb, whereof he that is hurt dieth, biting himself to death as a mad dog doth;" and Peter Martyr, another veracious chronicler, states that Martinique was once inhabited by women *alone*.

Nearer we drew, and ere long the windmills and houses, the cocoas and palms tossing their broad and fanlike branches, became visible. Then a fort or two, with the tricolour of France waving; and as the wind fell or began to change, and the spicy fragrance of the land reached us, the admiral fired a gun, and signalled to haul up the courses and shorten sail.

The beach of scorched sand seemed white as snow; above it was the wooded country, where forests of strange large leaves were tossing in the wind; and further off still, mellowed faint and blue in cloud and distance, were the summits of the Cardinal's Cap and Mont Pelee, the volcano whose terrors slumbered till 1851.

The fleet, according to an able plan arranged by our general, Sir Charles Grey, and our admiral, the valiant old Sir John Jervis, divided into three squadrons, for the purpose of assailing the island (which is thirty-five miles in length by fifteen in breadth*) on three points, and thus distracting the defence of the troops under General Rochambeau and Rouvigny.

One portion of the expedition, led by Sir Charles Grey in person, by Lieutenant-General Prescott, and Brigadier-General

* According to Captain Gardiner, thirty-nine miles in length by twenty-one in breadth.

Whyte, having with them the 2nd battalion of Light Infantry, the 15th Foot under Colonel Symes, two hundred seamen armed with pikes and pistols, several detached companies, and two amusettes, landed at Le Cul de Sac Marin, on the south coast of the island. There they drove the French back on every point, and established batteries on Mont Mathurine ; there two howitzers, served by the seamen, under Captain de Rousigne, of the Royal Artillery, demolished the works of the enemy on the Pigeon Isle, where two French companies, after a heavy fire of shot and shell, surrendered. By this success, the great bay of Fort Royal, with the town and citadel, were opened to our fleet. Immediately after this, the 15th regiment, led by Major Lyon, stormed the heights of Le Grand Bouclain, killing the enemy in great numbers, and taking their colours, ammunition, and cattle.

At the same time, a second squadron, under Major General Thomas Dundas, of Fingask, colonel of the 68th, but formerly of the *old* 80th, or Edinburgh Regiment, the veteran comrade of Cornwallis, with the 9th and 70th regiments, the 1st Light Infantry, and 2nd Grenadier Battalion, bore away to the northward, and effected a landing at La Trinité, and stormed Morne le Brun, under a heavy fire of musketry ; carrying all the works, cannon, and stores, and driving Bellegarde, the captain of the free blacks from the mountain fortress that bore his name. Colonel Campbell, with five companies of Light Infantry, seized Colon during the same night ; and, there, the grenadiers of the 33rd would have been cut to pieces, but for those of the 38th, under Captain MacEwan, who rescued them from an attack of the ferocious Bellegarde and his savages.

The *third division*, with whose operations I was more immediately connected, as the Scots Fusiliers formed a

part of it, with a battalion of Grenadiers, the 43rd Light Infantry, the marines, and other troops, under Sir Charles Gordon, and Captains Rogers and Cranky, of the navy, stood close in shore to the south-east, creeping almost at the foot of the two giant Pitons, with orders to force a landing at Caise des Navires,—the same place where, on a former occasion, our regiment had landed under General Bruce, but were overwhelmed by the number of the enemy.

While the *Adder*, and other ships forming our portion of the armament, kept off shore during the 5th, 6th, and 7th, hovering near the Diamond Rock, which is usually covered by wild pigeons, and threatening a small redoubt in the bay of St. Anne, we heard, repeatedly, the boom of the cannon on Mont Mathurine, and the patter of musketry in the distance; and though we knew not how the fortune of war went with our comrades, we longed to rejoin and unite our strength with them; nor did the grim preparations made by Dr Splints and the medical staff, the packing of lint, rolling of long-tailed bandages, the formation of stretchers for the wounded, by tying blankets to sergeants' pikes, which were to be borne by the bandsmen, in any way daunt our ardour; and a general joy spread from ship to ship, as the squadron, which had been standing to the northward, put about, when the night of the 8th of March came on, moonless and almost starless, for hazy clouds overhung the giant hills of Martinique, as we ran close in shore.

Then in silence, the boats were lowered, filled with thousands of soldiers, marines, and seamen, all with their arms carefully primed and loaded, and were pulled away towards Caise des Navires, where a stream which flows down from one of those stupendous sugarloaf-shaped mountains, Les Pitons du Carbet, falls into the sea, about four miles westward of the citadel of Fort Royal.

CHAPTER XLI.

LA CHAPELLE.

WHEN the drums were beating in every ship, previous to our landing, there occurred a singular circumstance.

An officer of ours, Lieutenant Bruce, was in his cabin ill with fever, and in the highest state of delirium ; but, inspired by the unusual commotion about him, and by the long roll of the drum, that reverberated between the echoing decks, he sprang from his cot, dressed and armed himself, and to the astonishment of all appeared with his company. This exertion Dr. Splints averred saved his life, by carrying off the fever ; but left him weak as a child.

No cheering was permitted, and in silence and with rapidity the boats in succession glided under the shadow of the lofty land, and entered Caise des Navires, a small bay having a strip of level beach, that was screened by thick woods from the occupants of certain batteries which had been erected at Point Negro, between it and Fort Royal.

Outside, the stars were shining with all their Indian brilliancy on the sea.

A deep, voiceless, and solemn silence lay over everything ; the sky, where crapelike clouds were floating—the heaving sea, and the wooded shore. We heard only the drip of the water as it fell from the blades of the feathered oars, and the clatter of the latter in the rowlocks, as we glided into the dark bay, gazing keenly the while at the impending rocks, and striving to pierce the gloom which shrouded them, as we expected every instant to see the red flash of a field-piece, and the water torn up, or a boat dashed to atoms by a round shot ; but we landed unmolested, and

formed by companies as quietly as if in a barrack-yard at home.

The company of the gallant Kinlochmoidart was the first of ours ashore. In the next boat were forty of our company, with Captain Glendonwyn, Lieutenant Haystone, and Second-Lieutenant Bruce, who carried the King's colour ; the Master of Glenluce bore the other. We, being all Scotsmen, gave the latter his title, though it was never recognized by Government, having been granted in 1791 by the Cardinal Duke of York, at Frascati, for the services of his family to the House of Stewart.

The water ran with a gentle ripple into the bay ; the air was laden by the fragrance of a thousand aromatic plants and trees and flowers, in full bloom and luxuriance, with the dank dew distilling from their pendant leaves, that had been palpitating and shrivelling during the past day under a hot and cloudless sun. Now, as we mustered fast, the cry of the scared pigeon began to wake the silence of the night, as it rose at times from the groves of the mahotrees (the bark of which is manufactured into ropes), and our men were turning over and tossing aside the lazy tortoises that crawled upon the white sand.

The battalions were soon formed. We were without guides—in the dark, and in a strange land ; we knew not what were the intentions of our brigadier, Colonel Sir Charles Gordon, who now took the command, and still less did we know how soon we might be engaged ; but he did not keep us long in suspense. During the day, having seen by his telescope, from the crosstrees of the *Asia*, a 64-gun ship, that a body of French troops occupied the great road to Fort Royale and the heights above Caise des Navires, he resolved to move towards the higher mountains and turn their flank. Trusting to his own observations and reconnaissances made from the seaward, he rode at our head

when the march began, and after pursuing for some time the course of the river which flows into the bay, and the banks of which were bordered by groves of bananas and Indian figs, and in the steeper places by wild coffee and tobacco plants, we attained more open ground, and toiling on in heavy marching order, reached the first base of the Pitons du Carbet, from whence we could see the sails of the fleet our home upon the waters, glimmering white and ghostlike in the pale starlight.

I was sergeant of the advanced guard.

Sir Charles, a sharp-eyed and grey-haired old soldier, rode near me, and I must own to experiencing an excitement of the keenest description, as we advanced in silence along the narrow path that led to the mountains, where we hoped to attack the enemy.

Across this path I remember seeing a narrow black line, which curled, rose, fell, and then passed away.

"Look out!" said the general; "that was a snake."

The solemn palms were drooping and motionless. Against the sky, about seventeen miles distant, the red summit of a volcano was glowing and emitting gleams of sulphurous light, such as one may see at times from the cone of a furnace. In these gleams, when looking back, I could see the bayonets of our columns glittering as they poured along the mountain-side.

Ere long, night began to give place to morning. A single star shone long and brilliantly amid the azure vault above us. Then rays of golden light began to play upon the sky, which, like the sea, became gradually purple and saffron, as the dawn of morn drew near.

Now some wild hogs started from a thicket of mangroves and passed us grunting and squeaking.

"Halt—look out—step short!" said several officers, while Harry Smith the aide-de-camp daringly made a dash forward

to reconnoitre, as this indicated men being in our vicinity ; but these proved to be only a few runaway negroes, who fled at our approach.

As day began to break, the tops of the stupendous Pitons became grey, then green, for they were shrouded in broad-leaved foliage ; then red and fiery, as the sun arose, and darkness, like a crape screen, receded down their sides into the valleys below, where the rivers Lezarde and du Petit Bresil flowed through the fertile savannahs to the sea. We saw the sea itself, rolling like a sheet of rippling light towards the shore as we gained the heights, and then a cheer burst from the men of the advanced guard

The enemy were in sight !

About a mile distant, at a place named La Chapelle, we saw several regiments of the French line drawn up in order of battle, with fieldpieces on their flanks. The morning sun was shining full upon them. Being clad in dark uniforms, they had a sombre aspect, but we saw their bayonets and steel ramrods flashing in the light as they loaded to receive us. We now halted till the regiment came up. It was the leading column of Gordon's brigade, and an emotion of pride glowed within me at the splendid and service-like aspect of these thousand Scotsmen in their red coats and high black bearskin caps, all unwearied by their night-march up the mountains, with the old white cross of St. Andrew waving in the early breeze of morn above them, when the young and gallant earl, their leader, gave the order to form open column of companies, and from thence to deploy into line double-quick as the French were unlimbering and wheeling round their artillery. There was a flash in front, and then a humming sound in the air overhead as a twelve-pound shot passed us and tore up the turf in our rear.

Another came ! The direction was better, but *not* for us, as it struck on the head a poor fellow in our company named

Graham, and killed him on the spot. He fell, and the line passed on, leaving him in the rear. There was a suffocating tightness in my throat and breast as I looked back.

Poor Graham was lying as still as death could make him, "with his back to the field and his feet to the foe." His bearskin cap had fallen off, and his yet nervous fingers grasped his undischarged musket. Where were now his pride of youth, or *esprit de corps*?—his obedience to discipline and to orders? He, who a moment before had been a living man, an ardent soldier, full of health and high spirit—he whose thoughts in that dread time had been, perchance, where mine were, at his mother's lonely hearth and home, in Scotland, far away, was now a shattered corpse, and left unburied on a foreign shore. A soldier fell out of the ranks and lingered for a moment beside him.

"Who are you?" asked Lord Kildonan as he rode past.

"Sandy- Graham's comrade, my lord," replied the man, while a tear stood in his eye, and he placed a broad plantain leaf over the disfigured features of the slain; "he had a sough in his heart that he would die in Martinique, and so has it e'en come to pass."

This was the first man I had seen killed on service, and his fall made a deep impression upon me.

The battalions of the 43rd Light Infantry, the Grenadiers, and the Scots Fusiliers being now formed in line, advanced rapidly towards the foe. On our right a body of seamen and marines from the *Asia* and *Adder*, led by Captain Rogers, of the navy, outstripped us in their eagerness to make a dash at the French cannon which bowled away in security, until we came within range of musket-shot, and opened a deadly fire upon them. The foe returned this with equal spirit, as the orders of the officer in command were to protect the trunk road, and prevent us, if possible, from falling down on Fort Royal on one hand,

or assisting General Dundas, who was then crossing the island to assail St. Pierre, on the other.

In those days we were inspired by a deep-rooted contempt for and rancorous aversion of the French people ; nor were *they* much behind us in cherishing the same silly sentiments ; thus both nations were animated by a political and religious hatred, which the newspapers—anonymous antagonists at all times—left nothing undone to fan and confirm. In the times of Pitt and Fox none could foresee the days of Sebastopol, or the field of Inkermann, when the English Guardsman, the kilted Highlander, and the French Zouave, would rush side by side as comrades in the charge.

Many brave officers and men of ours were now falling fast, as the French fired rapidly, and maintained the while an incessant whooping and yelling, amid which we could distinguish some of the popular cries of the period.

“ Vive la République ! Vive les sans culottes ! A bas les tyrans ! A bas les Bourbons ! Vive la France, le diable, et la gloire ! ”

As the clouds of white smoke that rolled along their line were blown aside by the morning wind, we could see their excited ranks, clad in the blue uniform of the Republic, with large red worsted epaulettes, cocked hats worn crosswise, and garnished with tall red feathers, their long black hair untied and floating down their backs, their wild and fierce faces embrowned by a tropical sun, their moustaches matted thick by the powder of the cartridges they had bitten.

Amid them, on horseback, was a dark and sallow officer of considerable stature. In an instant I recognized him to be the Colonel de Rouvigny. The name of Eulalie was on my lips—and my heart glowed with a desire for vengeance, for now I had been too long under fire, and seen too many fall, and too much blood and death and agony, to feel the least compunction or mercy.

He wore a tricoloured scarf, and was brandishing his sabre to encourage his men. I marked him well, primed my musket afresh, and raising it carefully to my shoulder, was taking a deliberate aim at his head, when I was struck to the earth by a ball in the chest. I knew not at the time that it was a half-spent ball, or that my buff belt had protected me from vital injury, but with the confused—the stunning sense of *being hit*, I staggered on my hands and knees, over killed and wounded men, to the rear.

“God—I am shot!” was my only exclamation as I gasped for breath, and placed a hand upon the contused place, while all my thoughts fled *home*—my mother and sister—their voices, their faces—and my past life, in all its most trivial incidents flashed like a vision before me!

“Only a spent ball, Ellis,” said Tom Telfer cheerfully. “You’ll be all right in a minute—hold up, like a man.”

“Here, my lad, take a pull at my canteen,” said a marine of the *Asia*, who was hastening forward; “you’ll find something in it better than sangaree.”

He held the little wooden barrel to my lips, and a draught of brandy-and-water revived me.

“Now, I knew that would make you well, sergeant.”

Some memories of his face and voice now came before me.

“Jack—Jack Joyce,” said I, “don’t you know me?”

“Not I, sergeant, but we meet so many on sea and land—in ship and garrison.”

“I am Oliver Ellis, who was with you on board the *Tartar* tender.”

“What! you—little Oliver, whom I helped to slip his moorings and run from the *Tartar* cutter, when we were off the Sandridge light!”

“The same,” said I.

“Give me your hand,” exclaimed the warm-hearted fellow, “who could have expected this!—what odd things

do happen in the sarvice to be sure ! But we have no time for talking here—for the shot are sowing all the turf about us as thick as peas—we'll have a yarn when we beat these fellows and halt."

I now resumed my musket—having given my pike to form a stretcher—and hastened forward ; but was too late to share in the brilliant charge, by which, at the point of the bayonet, Lord Kildonan with the Scots Fusiliers, and Colonel Myres with the 43rd, drove back the foe in disorder and precipitation, from their position at La Chapelle, while their cannon were all taken by the seamen and marines of the *Asia* and *Adder*.

Our column then reformed, and over the most difficult, steep, and rocky ground, under a hot morning sun, we followed the fugitives beyond the heights of Berne, leaving the plateau in our rear dotted by long lines of killed and wounded, in blue and red uniforms,—but the number of the former greatly preponderated.

CHAPTER XLII.

A PAIR OF COLOURS.

"WELL, boy," said the Earl of Kildonan, when I brought him the casualty list of our company, "what think you of your first engagement?"

"I think it horrible, my lord," said I; "and I shall have this slaughter before me for the rest of my life."

"Nonsense!" replied the earl, laughing; "you will soon consider such an affair a mere brush, my lad—a flash in the pan."

Without food or refreshment we now pushed on, through difficult ground, torn by volcanic throes into deep chasms and stony gullies, where watercourses brawled, and on the sides of which the wild vine and tobacco-plant grew in luxuriance; over the heights of Berne, above Ance la Haye, following the retiring French without a check, until we came upon a village with a spire in its centre, and a battery of guns on a turf wall in its front. This place was named Cayman. The fire of the battery mowed down some of our men; but Kinlochmoidart with his company made a rush and carried it at the point of the bayonet, driving out or slaying the defenders.

As we proceeded through the village, a mulatto child that strayed into the street between the cross fire of the retiring enemy and ours, was saved by Jack Joyce, the marine. On this, the French for a time ceased firing, and we gave him an applauding cheer, in which the French joined.

"Spike the guns on the turf wall," said Sir Charles Gordon; "this battery is useless to me."

"The devil!" exclaimed Haystone; "here are the guns taken, and we have not a nail to spike them with."

"Next time you come into action, be sure, my lad, and bring a pocketful," said Glendonwyn laughing, as we knocked off the trunnions, and again resumed our advance upon Fort Royal.

It was midday now, and the heat of the sun was great. Our poor fellows, laden as they were, and weary with toiling over such rough ground, and maintaining a desultory skirmish with the retiring French, suffered considerably from thirst; but the wild tamarinds, citrons, and beans, afforded them some refreshment; and a few ate the tender sprouts of the young palms, which were procured for them by some negroes, who followed us in search of occupation, or more probably of plunder.

On both sides of the highway we passed ruined farms and sugar-mills, where the proprietors had been slain as royalists by the republicans, or as white men by the blacks and mulattoes of Bellegarde, with whom the military murderers of the old *Sieur de Mazancy* had fraternized. A great body of these free blacks had been armed with muskets and bayonets, to act in concert with the troops of the republic against us, and wild, subtle, and savage antagonists we found them in every encounter.

It was after we had passed the burning village and dismantled battery of Cayman, that a terrible—but, for *me*, fortunate—incident occurred.

We were marching by fours through a sequestered place, where, on one side, the sugar-canes grew high and dense; while, on the other, a steep and rocky bank, covered by wild mangroves, laurel-bushes, and gourds, sloped abruptly upward on our left, and was crowned by some lofty palm and cocoa-trees, the broad branches of which hung pendant and drooping, as there was not a breath of air to stir them. A hoarse

shout that rose suddenly from the rear and centre of the regiment, caused me and all who were in front to pause and look back.

A savage negro of Bellegarde's force, as the tricoloured scarf across his bare black chest informed us—for this appendage, with a pair of red striped breeches, formed his sole attire—sprang from among the sugar-canes, and, flourishing a sharp sabre, by one deadly stroke—as a Malay might handle his crease—cut the Master of Glenluce, our junior second-lieutenant, who bore the regimental colour, across the stomach, severing all the intestines and slaying him on the instant. He was a mere boy, being two years younger than I; but brave, handsome, and soldierly. The negro tore the standard from his hands and sprang up the rugged precipice, with all the agility of a monkey, escaping a shower of musketry, which, as the men in their hurry and confusion fired with fixed bayonets, fell all wide of the aim.

"A hundred guineas for the colour!" exclaimed Lord Kildonan, leaping from his horse, which could never have clambered up the face of the basaltic precipice.

With several of ours, who had thrown off their knapsacks, bearskins, and everything that might impede them, I sprang away in pursuit. Being more active and lithe than my companions, I soon distanced them in climbing with my musket slung, and in my energy using hands as well as feet to ascend the steepest part of the rocks. The firing ceased now, for the sable assassin with our colour had disappeared, having concealed himself under some of the luxuriant masses of foliage, or in one of the clefts of the rock.

Breathless, bathed in perspiration by heat and excitement, I struggled up the flinty bluff, grasping the wild vines, creepers, and yellow gourds, that matted all its front; filled with ardour by the opportunity afforded me for distinguish-

ing myself in the face of the whole brigade, which was now halted on the road below, inspired by emulation to maintain the distance I had already placed between myself and the other pursuers ; and not without some dread the while, of seeing the bronze-like form of the giant negro appear suddenly above me, brandishing his reeking sabre, against which, in an arm so powerful, I could have offered but a meagre opposition.

I was close to the summit of the rocks, and already had my hands on the projecting roots of the nodding palm-trees that fringed the summit, when, on chancing to look back, I saw the negro with the standard, crouching behind a mass of basaltic rock, on a little plateau, some twenty feet or so below me. His sharp crooked sabre was in his hand ; his glossy black eyes were fixed upon me with a bloodshot and upward glare, and in his face there shone a grin of triumph.

I almost laughed on finding the sanguinary wretch so completely in my power. Placing my heels firmly upon the strong branch of a gourd creeper, with my back against the wall of rock up which I had been clambering, I cast about my musket, looked carefully to the priming, cocked, and just as he was in the act of springing at me, sabre in hand, I fired !

With a bound into the air he fell on his back, with the flag below him, and beating the earth wildly with his bare heels, while blowing blood and foam from his mouth together.

A clamour from the regiment rose upward, as I fixed my bayonet and descended to where the fallen assassin—a gigantic Angola savage, formed like a Hercules, and dark as if hewn from the blackest marble—was lying. I approached cautiously, and not without fear that he might yet rise and spring upon me, even when in the throes of death, for I

knew well how subtle these people were. After an irresolute and anxious pause of nearly a minute, I passed my bayonet through his body, which was then lying still and motionless. I thought it shuddered, and I am certain that I also shuddered, when thrusting him over the precipice into a black chasm, where a mountain torrent rushed towards the Cul de Sac Royal.

On picking up his weapon, it proved to be a beautiful French sabre, the hilt of which was covered with elaborate silver ornaments. Among these I perceived a coronet, and on the blade the name of "Louis de Mazancy ;" and then a pang shot through my breast, for this sword had evidently belonged to the father of Eulalie, and was a relic of her family.

Descending the rocks, I rejoined the still halted regiment, and placed the blue silk standard, heavy with its embroidered thistles, the cross of St. Andrew, and the trophies of "Quebec" and "Belle-Isle," in the hands of the earl, who stood with a group of officers around the mutilated body of Glenluce, who was now cold, pale, and dead.

"You are a noble fellow, Ellis," said he, "and have bravely won the hundred guineas. I would rather have lost a thousand than one of my colours."

I reddened deeply, and, while panting with exertion, replied,—

"Excuse me, my lord—but this—this money you speak of—I would rather die than accept it!"

"How?"

"Change of situation can never make me forget that I am——"

"What?" asked Kildonan haughtily.

"A gentleman," said I, bowing.

The earl bowed in return, with a smile of pleasure.

"Let this money," I resumed, "be given to the widows of

the regiment, my lord"—(my emotion became deeper)—
"could I accept *money* for the rescue of the same colour
which my father carried under yours at the siege of Belle-
Isle?"

"Bravo!" exclaimed the officers, clapping their hands.

"Pardon the offer, Ellis—you are right," said the earl;
"so truly can I appreciate the spirit which animates you,
that I now promise you shall carry the standard you have
so bravely restored to us; and as you have so sternly
avenged the unhappy assassination of the Master of Glen-
luce, you shall wear the poor boy's sword on receiving the
commission which his death has rendered vacant."

I had no words wherewith to thank the earl, but remem-
ber old Captain Glendonwyn shaking my hand warmly as he
said,—

"Lieutenant Ellis, I congratulate you;" for all ensigns
of fusilier corps were then styled second-lieutenants.

"Hurrah! Master Oliver," added bluff Sergeant Drum-
birrel, as we resumed the march; "when I enlisted you in
Compton Rennel, didn't I say you would one day be a cap-
tain, as your father was before you, and so it has come to
pass?"

The Master of Glenluce was rolled in a blanket and hastily
interred at the wayside by a small party left for that purpose
under Corporal Mahony, while the brigade pushed on to
higher ground, for now, as we neared a place called St.
Catharine's, a fire was opened upon us from some redoubts
which were mounted with heavy guns, and manned by a
considerable force, both of the French line and mulattoes.
In consequence of the extent of these works Sir Charles did
not at first deem himself strong enough to attempt an as-
sault, but took up a position which enabled us, on one hand,
to overlook them, and, on the other, to have an easy com-
munication with our transports.

On this advantageous ground we remained in bivouac for three days, suffering severely from the alternate heat by noon, and the chill dew by night.



CHAPTER XLIII.

A HALT.

As a natural sequel to events so exciting, I became low-spirited for some time, and the tiger-like eyes of the dying Angolian seemed ever glaring into mine. Jack Joyce the marine endeavoured to console, while congratulating me on promotion, by saying that the man I had killed "was scarcely a man at all, but only a nigger, and was not to be considered much more than if he had been a Johnnie Cra-paud—and all the world valued *his* life at the worth of a rope's end, or a piece of old junk."

As we had come ostensibly to free the oppressed colonists alike from rebel troops and insurgent blacks, we were not allowed to plunder, and were scant enough of provisions. I was greatly in want of money ; but here an odd event occurred. Tom Telfer, when breaking a ration biscuit, found a guinea baked in the middle of it, and shared it with me.

On the morning of the 12th we were to advance again. I was not yet gazetted an officer, and on this morning Tom and I were cooking our breakfast in a camp-kettle, at a fire which we had kindled in gipsy fashion, between two stones. Around, our comrades were busy, some cleaning their arms, others cooking or packing their kits ; and all were singing,

whistling, or engaged in thoughtless frolic, for the beauty of the scene and of the morning proved charming. On one side the blue sea was seen spreading far away, till lost and blent with the cloudless sky. In the distance were the towering Pitons, covered with foliage to their steep summits, which were lost in a shroud of vapour. Far down below us, we saw our fleet at anchor, with canvas loose and gun-ports open for any emergency. On our left were a succession of green ridges that lay between us and Fort Royal.

Close to where Tom and I were stirring our cocoa, Dr. Splints and his two assistants were operating with true medical *sang-froid* on a poor Frenchman, whose leg had been shattered by a musket-shot, and each time they probed the wound he shuddered from head to foot, or uttered a shriek and tore the blue sleeve of his uniform with his teeth, while his dark eyes flashed with agony and fear.

At last his leg was fairly cut off, and an orderly bore it away and tossed it into a trench, wherein a few dead who had been shot in a recent skirmish were lying. The unfortunate Gaul gazed after it wistfully, and then closed his eyes in despair, for with it vanished all his hopes of glory. He pined and died soon after, and I was one of those who buried him.

After a long and careful reconnoissance, the column was formed, and we advanced again.

The breathless heat of noon was past now. There was a delicious coolness in the breeze and a voluptuous tranquillity in the air. The leafy solitudes through which we had to march—the chastened light of the purple and golden sky, which shed its reflected hues upon the land and water, made lighter still the hearts even of the most unthinking. The broad fan-like branches of the palms were hanging

stilly and solemnly down, and their long blade-formed leaves were scarcely vibrating.

On debouching from a dense thicket, we found that the foe had abandoned the battery and works at St. Catharine; so, while we—the Scots Fusiliers—advanced double-quick and took quiet possession of them, Colonel Myers, with the 43rd and five companies of Grenadiers, crossed four ravines higher up, storming at the bayonet's point all the batteries which defended them, and opening thus a clear avenue to Fort Royal, the capital of the island.

I cannot close this chapter better than by a quotation from the despatch of General Sir Charles Grey :—

“Sir Charles Gordon then occupied the posts of Gentilly and La Coste. The good abilities and conduct of Sir Charles Gordon and of Colonel Myers were eminently manifest throughout this arduous service, and all the troops of my division have performed their duty with merit and bravery. I have the honour to enclose the casualty lists, together with Lieutenant-Colonel the Right Honourable the Earl of Kildonan's recommendation of Sergeant Oliver Ellis for a commission, he having saved a colour of the Scots Fusiliers by an act of signal bravery.”

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE SKIRMISH AT MORNE ROUGE.

WE were already within cannon-shot of the outworks of Fort Royal, and could see the British flag flying triumphantly above the captured batteries of Mont Mathurine and the Pigeon Island, the guns of which command all the bay, when Lieutenant Harry Smith of the Royals arrived with orders for Sir Charles Gordon to fall back with his brigade and attack the town of St. Pierre, in conjunction with the corps of Major-General Dundas.

St. Pierre—the scene of the earlier sorrows of Eulalie and of her father's murder ! my heart beat more quickly, when I heard the order given, about ten in the morning.

“What is the distance from this ?” asked the general, glancing at his watch.

“Ten miles,” replied Smith.

“The ground—”

“Mountainous and difficult—woody and intersected by at least ten streams.”

“We shall be there by one o'clock, I hope. Who commands in St. Pierre.”

“The Colonel de Rouvigny.”

In ten minutes after this, we had folded our blankets, slung our camp-kettles, quitted the bivouac where we had spent the night in view of Fort Royal, and, with the 2nd battalion of Grenadiers, the 65th regiment, and the light companies of the 33rd and 40th, commenced a retrograde march, and passing the Caise des Navires on our left, proceeded over mountains and through dense forests, midway

between the sea and the base of the Pitons du Carbet, towards the scene of our new operations.

The day was unusually hot for the season, even in the Antilles ; and we had hunger and thirst to encounter as well as heat and toil. To allay the former—at the risk of fever—we partook of bananas, oranges, and pomegranates with sangaree and rum, rich cordials and the juices of citron, lime, and sugar-cane, which we found in plenty in a French merchant's store. The fruit brought from gardens in our vicinity, usually lay in heaps in our bivouacs—and its hues were always brilliant, as its flavours were alluring.

After we had forded the river du Carbet, above the little town of St. Jacques, the heat of the noon grew intolerable. Our noses, lips, necks, and ears were scorched by the flaming rays of a sun that seemed to shine vertically over our heads ; there came no breeze from the glassy sea, and no clouds hovered in the sultry heavens. The languid sheep and cattle lolled out their dry tongues as they lay panting in the shadow of the listless trees ; and there was no sound in the air, but the buzz of huge insects. The heat soon exhaled clouds of vapour from the ocean—but in their bosom lurked agues, fever, and death. A volcano grumbled in the distance, in proportion as land and sea grew hot ; yet manfully we struggled on, laden like pack-horses with all our arms and camp equipage, to beat up the quarters of M. de Rouvigny in St. Pierre.

We still formed the advanced guard, and on this occasion I was sent forward with a reconnoitring party, in extended order, to prevent the main body from falling into any ambuscade, and the difficulty of forcing one's way in marching order through woods in these Indian isles, where there were few roads, is beyond description. The trees are woven up together by dense masses of dwarf mangroves and under-wood, and by wild creeping plants of a hundred kinds,

which are so juicy, tough, and tenacious, that they will neither break nor tear; and under all is a species of grass, the serrated blades of which cut the hands and face when we stumbled on them. These primeval woods and jungles were everywhere intersected by ravines of basalt and pumice-stone, where wild tobacco, vines, and gourds were growing, and where streams from the Pitons brawled towards the sea.

The heat we encountered on this day of toil—heat suffocating as the breath of a furnace—as if by very contrast, brought to memory the cool breezes that fanned the green fern, the solemn pines, the purple heather, and the golden corn-fields in our distant Scottish home—the home of our hearts, and our forefathers' graves, by loch and lea, by hill and strath and glen; and then we thought of the hearty old winter days, and talked of them too, as if by doing so we would keep ourselves *cool*—days when the hazel-nuts and acorns lay shrivelled in the bare and leafless woods; when the *sough* of the winter wind was heard without, while its icy breath brightened the sea-coal fire within; the snow-clad hills, the frozen lakes, the bearded waterfall, the red leaves that whirled before the bitter Norlan blast—all these I say, by very contrast, came before our fancy, as we marched on, perspiring, gasping, and breathless, under the hot sky of the sultry Indian isles.

I often remarked that when on the march in hot weather, when steam arose from the column, when the water became putrid in our canteens, when red coats and buff belts become alike blackened and rotten by perspiration—unwashed, choked with dust, and blinded by mosquito bites, and while the sky was glowing like heated brass above us, we spoke most of home and winter.

With the two light companies and the 65th, Colonel John Campbell, of Blytheswood (commander of the 9th Foot), an officer of high military reputation, forced a passage through

the dense leafy wilderness of Bois le Buc, the intricacies of which might have puzzled its native denizens the monkeys, towards a place named Montigné; while the general with the Fusiliers and other forces, proceeded to the heights of Capot and Calebasse.

We had just attained the crest of the latter about day-break, when we heard the sound of heavy firing, and beheld a body of the enemy, about six hundred in number, strongly posted, holding our 65th completely in check and with considerable slaughter. Now the white smoke started in huge puffs from the green wood; anon it rolled in line along the slope of the hill; now bayonets were seen to flash in the sunlight, and then we saw the white colours of the 65th, waving as the red coats were mingled in wild *mêlée* with the blue of the Republicans.

Our company of the Scots Fusiliers, with sixty-three light infantry men, under Captain Ramsey, of the Queen's Regiment, were detached double-quick through the jungle of Bois le Buc to attack the French in flank and support the 65th. Gaining the crest of an eminence named Poste-au-Pin, at four hundred yards we opened a fire, which enfiled their whole line; and closing up with all speed, effectually silenced the fire of the French. They then fell back under the orders of a tall officer, who was mounted on a black horse, and who particularly distinguished himself, for he led the charge of bayonets that ended in a hand-to-hand encounter with Colonel Campbell, whom he slew by a pistol-shot, after that powerful Highlander had hewn down two sides by his sword. Over ground strewn with the bloody *débris* of this conflict, we drove the enemy back until we gained a position on the ridge of Morne Rouge, while they took shelter under the guns of a small redoubt, and maintained from thence a desultory skirmish with our men, who lurked among the under-wood, and picked them off on every available opportunity.

Around the tall and stately Laird of Blytheswood, the dead lay thick upon the green savannah, for the brave 65th fought desperately to rescue his body. Many of the slain retained a portion of the attitude in which death struck them. I saw a 65th man, who had been shot while in the act of bayoneting a Frenchman. The former lay with his musket still at the charge ; his dark brows knit—his strong teeth clenched as if by lock-jaw—the glazed eyes yet fierce and stern. The latter, who had died of bleeding, with the bayonet in his body, had his clasped hands and sightless eyes uplifted to heaven, for he had died in the act of prayer. Beside them crouched a dog, which had belonged to one or other, and seemed waiting for his master to rise and whistle him on as usual.

On searching a dead Frenchman's havresack for food, I found, to my disgust, a female finger, whereon were three valuable rings, which he had been unable to remove in time, and so had hewed the member off—for such acts were quite common in the French army in those days of anarchy and cruelty.

With a dozen of my own company, I succeeded in luring the mounted officer who slew poor Blytheswood, with a few of his men, into a plantation of sugar-canes beyond range of the redoubt guns. We lay flat on our faces, and only started up at times to have a shot at each other, when our black bearskin caps on one side, or the huge misshapen cocked hats and red plumes on the other, became visible above the cane-tops. Here Tom Telfer shot the officer's horse, and before he could free himself from the stirrups, with a shout of exultation we were upon him. As we collared, disarmed, and dragged him up, what were my emotions on finding myself face to face with my quondam padre, the Colonel de Rouvigny, commandant at St. Pierre !

CHAPTER XLV

THE BLANK FUSILADE.

WITH Rouvigny we captured a few of his men, and an officer (a very handsome young man), who gave up his sword to me with the most perfect *sang froid*. Before I could address our chief prisoner, who never deigned or affected to recognize me, the brigadier came galloping up and on discovering the rank and importance of Rouvigny, desired me to conduct him under escort, to a ruined sugar-mill, which stood about a mile in our rear, and was beyond range of the cannon in the redoubt. As we moved off, the young officer began to sing gaily,—

Halte la ! halte la !
La Garde Royale est là !

Surprised to hear the refrain of this old song in the mouth of one I deemed a republican officer, I turned to address him, and asked how, at such a time, he was so light of heart. On this, he told me that he was one of those whose sympathies were with the recently extinguished monarchy of France—that he was sick of serving among republican soldiers, who daily put his life in jeopardy—and that he rejoiced in being taken prisoner by the allies of Louis XVII.

“ Your name, monsieur ? ” said I.

“ Dutriël—sous-lieutenant of the 37th, late the regiment of M. le Maréchal de Turenne ; and now a ragged battalion in the service of the republic—*sacredie !* ”

“ The name you have given sounds familiar to me.”

" 'Tis very probable, *mon camarade*, for my father was M. le Chevalier Naudau Dutriel, governor of Guadaloupe and La Grande Terre, for his most Christian majesty ; but was unfortunately defeated and taken prisoner by the British under General Harrington in the old war, before we became republicans, atheists, philosophers, and the devil only knows what more."

" Such sentiments will place your head in peril at home."

" Bah ! " said he ; " I have no intention of going home. I am a soldier ; my head can take care of itself ; but it is my heart and purse that are usually in most danger ; for the first is sure to fall a prey to any pretty wench, and the last is ever shared with a comrade while a shot remains in it."

There is among men who serve or have served in the army, a community of sentiment—a species of freemasonry peculiar to them alone. The French so happy at all times in their terms, style it *cameraderie* ; thus the chevalier and I became as old friends in ten minutes.

" Sir, as a gentleman, you are at liberty to retain your sword," said I, presenting him with his weapon, which he received with courtly grace.

" And I ? " demanded Rouvigny fiercely.

I placed his sabre under my foot, and snapped the blade in pieces.

" Tonnerre de Ciel ! " he cried in a voice of fury.

" As for you, sir," said I, " you shall hear from me presently."

It was clear there was no " freemasonry " between M. Rouvigny and his captor.

" Vive le Chevalier Dutriel ! " cried a French soldier.

" A bas l'aristocrate —vive le bonnet rouge ! " growled another, of the new *régime*.

"Oh, pray keep your temper, my dear M. de Rouvigny," said Dutriel; "you have, on many a day sorely tried mine—I, a gentleman of old France—you a child of rapine—a mushroom, fostered in the pestilent mire of the republic. A colonel—*sacredie*!—who found his epaulettes on a barricade or at the foot of a gallows. He is your prisoner, *mon camarade*—make much of him, for he is a very distinguished man.

Halte la ! halte la !

La Garde Royale est la !"

By this time we had reached the ruined sugar-mill, from the quiet neighbourhood of which our arrival scared away some poor negro women who were weaving pretty baskets of canes and bamboo, and in the lower apartment of which I confined Rouvigny, apart from the other prisoners, as I had a project to put in execution against him.

Circumstanced as he was, I could not challenge him to a duel, and, as I had not yet my epaulettes, the chances were, that natheless his republicanism and boasted spirit of *égalité*, he would have declined to meet me; yet I was resolved that he should taste all the bitterness of degradation, and all the agony of death, without its actual infliction.

After posting sentinels round the mill, and making other dispositions to preclude an escape, I entered the wretched apartment,—if it could be named so,—a mere vault or storehouse, where Rouvigny was confined. It was littered by heaps of rotting sugar-canes, old casks, and broken packing-boxes. On one of these I found him seated, with a sullen air; his blue uniform coat was open, and his tri-coloured sash was thrown aside for coolness, as the atmosphere was still close and sultry.

"Monsieur de Rouvigny will soon have reason for the exertion of all his philosophy," said I.

"An easy matter for him at all times," he replied, with a gesture of scorn.

"We shall see."

"*Bon !*" said he, with a grimace.

"Think what you are, sir, and how situated ?"

"I am one of the new French school of philanthropists."

"Indeed !"

"I am an exterminator of aristocrats. Dolt that I was to spare that jesting dog, Dutriel."

"Then it was in this spirit that you murdered the Sieur de Mazancy at the head of his regiment."

"Excuse me, *mon soldat*, but you are very ignorant. He died by the same decree of the National Assembly which doomed all his class to the lantern, the sabre, or the guillotine."

"And his daughter——" my voice trembled.

He ground his teeth,—then gave a sardonic smile, and replied,—“I converted Eulalie into the wife of a plain but honest French citizen. Into *what* have you converted her ?”

"Assassin and spy !" I exclaimed, with fury.

"*Ouf*—you are anything but polite."

"Poltroon ! to murder a woman in the night," I continued, with growing bitterness.

He uttered a shout of laughter, and rasped his spurred heels to and fro against the cask on which he was seated. Then, with provoking *nonchalance*, he proceeded to light a cigar.

"Do you smoke ?" said he ;—"oh, you don't—well, you will permit me ; these are very choice Havannahs. You have no objections ?—*bon !* such an obliging fellow you are ! It seems we come to Martinique to talk as well as to fight."

"We have come to repress and punish outrage—to save Frenchmen from Frenchmen and savages," said I.

"True ; we have been apt to consider prosperity treason

to the people. Wealth, an enemy to the purity of a republic, and in this spirit have ventured to hang and even to boil in their own coppers a few very aristocratic planters in their exceedingly democratic sugar-mills—but what then? Do have a cigar, *mon ami*.”

“Bantering villain! we have had enough of this. I would speak of Eulalie de Rouvigny, whom you have destroyed like a wretch as you are.”

“Monsieur permits himself to be impertinent. Am I, a French citizen—a husband, to be accountable in this little matter to you?”

“You are accountable to humanity.”

“Bah! we don’t value that much in these days when charges of bayonets are common things.”

“It would seem so.”

“Well, monsieur?”

“What inspired a deed so foul, so cruel, as the abduction and the death of Eulalie?”

“Honour.”

“Honour!” I reiterated contemptuously.

“Nay, don’t interrupt me, and don’t repeat my words if you please,” he replied, grinding his sharp teeth; “honour and retributive justice were my guides and my incentives. The honour of a husband whom she had deserted—the vengeance of France, whom she had betrayed. Love and revenge are two fingers of the same hand.”

“By Heaven, Colonel Rouvigny, she was a thousand times better and purer than the mother who, for her sins, encumbered the earth with such a being as you.”

“Very probably,” he continued in his bantering manner, while whiffing his cigar, and while the savage gleam in his eyes belied the affected suavity of his manner; “but my most choleric friend, have the kindness to remember that she was mine by marriage——”

"A marriage!—a foul snare, which she abhorred, and by which her happiness was withered, her future blasted."

"*Sang Dieu !* she told you all this?"

"Yes," said I, with a cutting smile.

"Well—did this entitle her to betray France?"

"She was, like her father, true to France and France's ancient line of kings."

"Tyrants and gluttons, with whom the men of the new world had done."

"Monsieur, you are here at my mercy——"

"At yours—*tonnerre de Ciel !* well?"

"I am about to kill you by a platoon of musketry."

"Would you dare to murder me—a prisoner of war—in cold blood?" said he, starting.

"Yes—as a spy and assassin ; you will therefore have the Christian spirit, I trust, to make your peace with Heaven, and to reveal to me the fate of your wife—of Eulalie de Mazancy—on board that vessel, the schooner *Les Droits de l'Homme*, off Barbadoes."

As I said this with considerable solemnity, he changed colour. Rage, malignant hatred, and fear, were all very plainly expressed in his pale and marble-like visage. His stern brow grew frightfully contracted, and glistening beads of perspiration seemed to start from the old sabre-cut that had traversed it. He knocked the ashes carefully from his cigar, and then tossing it away, spat full at me, in all the fury of impotent wrath, and uttered the single word—

"*Never !*"

It seemed to come from the depths of his chest. He covered his face with his hands ; then starting up erect, he cried in a voice of stern authority,—

"Lead on—I am ready."

"Follow me," I replied.

He hesitated, so I added, full of rage that I had failed to learn the secret of her fate,—

“Follow, if you would avoid the disgrace of being dragged.”

“*Tête Dieu !*” he exclaimed, and smote his forehead.

We stepped from the ruined sugar-mill into the full blaze of the sunshine, and on the green luxuriant grass that grew under the foliage of a citron-grove. All Nature seemed so sunny and beautiful, that I felt a momentary compunction on witnessing the farewell glance he cast around him—a farewell to light, to life, and to the future ; for he could not have a shadow of hope, on seeing eight of my comrades in line resting on their muskets, and close by Tom Telfer, standing shovel in hand beside a newly-made grave—a hole of ominous aspect, six feet by two, which he had just dug by my directions. While he tied a handkerchief over the eyes of Rouvigny, I ordered the party to load with *blank* cartridge, and his frame shuddered when he heard the ram-rods go home with a dull sound on the powder ; but knowing the trick we were to play, they all loaded carefully.

Our prisoner knelt down near the pretended grave, and folded his arms without a word of prayer or entreaty ; while the Chevalier Dutriel lighted a fresh cigar, and looked on with perfect indifference, for he had an undisguised hatred for his newly-made republican colonel, and had seen too many of his friends perish thus in the citadel of St. Pierre, to be startled by such an episode. He deemed it merely an act of retribution.

In a low voice I offered Rouvigny his life for the secret of Eulalie’s fate ; but received no reply.

“Fire !” I exclaimed.

At twenty paces eight muskets were discharged full at his head. When the smoke cleared away, to my astonishment and alarm we saw him lying flat on his face, with the

ammunition-paper whirling about him. Dreading some terrible mistake, we all rushed forward and lifted him. Not a ball had been fired ; he was without even a scratch, but hung in our grasp—*stone dead !*

CHAPTER XLVI.

CAPTURE OF ST. PIERRE.

THIS unforeseen catastrophe filled us with pity for him, and caused me some alarm for myself in having thus trifled with the life of a prisoner of war.

“ *Morbleu !* ” said the Chevalier Dutriel ; “ you meant to let him *taste* the bitterness of death ; but I fear he has found your potion a little too bitter. Do not waste compassion on him, *mon ami* ; he felt none when he hewed off the heads of St. Julian and De la Bourdonaye, two of the most brilliant officers in the Régiment de Turenne. He had no respect for the white hairs of the Sieur de Mazancy when he tore the cross of St. Louis from his breast, and shot him in cold blood ; no compassion for the youth or beauty of his daughter. Bah ! away with this six feet of carrion, and cover it up.”

These words somewhat restored me, and, on ascertaining that Rouvigny was really dead, we rolled him up in an old mat that lay in the mill, while I ordered some negroes who were loitering near to dig a deeper tomb for him.

Perceiving that after digging a little way they relinquished that grave and proceeded to dig another, I inquired the reason, on which an old Angola negro, whose white woolly

head seemed to have been snowed on, pointed to a large stone in the hole, and said, in broken English,—

“White man no wish to be bury there.”

“Why so, Quashi?” (All negroes are named Quashi.)

“Big stone there, massa — dam big stone—dig other place.”

Then another old *Obeah* negro—a species of physician or conjuror, of whom the others stood much in awe—informed us in bad French that whenever a stone was found in a grave the place was deemed unpropitious. In short, they dug so many holes, and found so many unlucky stones, that the whole place was likely to be uprooted without the unfortunate Rouvigny finding a resting-place, till two of the Fusiliers threw off their belts and jackets, assumed the shovel, and acted the part of sextons.

By the time this melancholy episode was over, and we had reached the regiment, the enemy had abandoned their redoubt at Le Morne Rouge, leaving two fieldpieces in possession of the 65th Regiment, with many military stores.

I feared much that I was in a scrape on reporting that the French colonel had died in our hands; but no inquiry followed, for a life more or less mattered little, when we had such work in hand as the conquest of the French Antilles.

I remember the Chevalier Dutriol showing to me the place where, in the attack that was made on Martinique by General Hopson in 1759, two hundred of the 42nd Highlanders—“Montagnards,” as he said,—“du seconde bataillon du Régiment de milord Jean Murray, qu’on avait amené d’Ecosse, sous le convoi du *Ludlow Castle*,” had flung their muskets aside in the old Celtic fashion, drawn their swords, and carried all before them. He showed us, also, where their dead, among whom was a Lieutenant Leslie, were buried, and before we left Martinique the Scots Fusiliers enclosed the place by a low wall, and planted it with laurel-trees; for even here,

under the shadow of the Pitons, as under the shadow of the Pyramids, has the war-pipe of Albyn sent up its shrill "invitation to the wolf and the raven."

The Chevalier Dutriol afterwards entered the regiment of Sir Louis de Watteville, and fell in battle under the banner of Wellington in Spain, in one of the first encounters after Corunna.

We now resumed our advance upon St. Pierre, after interring the dead who lay with Campbell of Blytheswood at Morne Rouge.

"We have had warm work, to-day, gentlemen," said the young earl thoughtfully.

"Yes, Kildonan," replied Sir Charles Gordon, "and this trench filled with dead is a terrible proof of it. Be quick, my lads, and cover the poor fellows up. Farewell to you!" continued the old general, waving his cocked hat to the dead, who lay piled over each other in ghastly and bloody rows; "may God receive you, boys! What is your turn to-day, may be *ours* to-morrow, for we know not what an hour may bring forth."

This was their only funeral oration; and leaving a party under Corporal Telfer to cover them up, our bands began playing as we pushed once more westward along the mountain road. On our right towered the wooded Pitons; on our left was the silent shore, its rocks and verdure seeming to palpitate under the rays of the hot sun, while the boundless sea rolled its waves in hundreds of thousands upon the whitened beach—rising, falling, racing, and foaming on.

By rosy daybreak next morning, on descending a green hill, over which the main road from Fort Royal passes, we saw the beautiful bay and clean pretty town of St. Pierre, with its two slender spires, its irregular houses in the form of a semicircle, extending to Bourg St. Pierre, and its castle on a rocky promontory with the tricolor of France flying

from its summit. A white flag was displayed upon the Ursuline convent, to protect it from shot and shell ; a second was waving on the hospital, built for the poor and infirm in the reign of Louis XIV., and a third was on the Jesuits' Cloister, a fine edifice formed of marble and freestone.

The old citadel, which was built by the *Sieur d'Enambuc*, in 1666, had two great towers, each having four portholes. It had also several parapets and battlements of stone, which had been further strengthened by *Rouvigny* ; thus its general aspect suggested ideas of a sanguinary escalade. This fortress was the ancient stronghold of the governor-general of the Antilles, and of the French Royal West-India Company, whose charter from Louis XIV was dated in 1665.

Around, were broad and fertile savannahs under beautiful cultivation, where the sprouting rice and maize, sugar and Indian corn, waved in the morning breeze, like the pale green ripples of a shallow sea.

As we advanced upon the town, two of our men were slain under somewhat peculiar circumstances.

One—an old soldier, who had escaped without a wound the dangers of eight engagements—found an old rusty bomb lying by the wayside, and chancing heedlessly to poke the fuse-hole with his bayonet, it exploded, and blew his head and right arm completely off. The fate of the other soldier was still more remarkable, and afforded those who were near him, some cause for reflection.

He was one of the light infantry battalion, and had frequently misconducted himself. He was uttering fearful oaths in the ranks as we advanced, until he received a personal rebuke from the General, who said,—

“ Silence, sirrah ! a forlorn hope will soon be required, and I expect that you will be among the first to volunteer, to make amends for your present misconduct.”

"A forlorn hope ; and who the devil is to lead us ?" asked the soldier, insolently.

"I shall," replied the general, haughtily ; "do you imagine, fellow, that I will order my men on any duty that I personally shrink from ?"

"I'll not volunteer, general ; I am not such a d——d fool ! I set some value on my life ; and being doubtful about another world, wish to remain in this one as long as I can."

"Silence, I command you ; or you shall be sent as a prisoner to the rear !"

On this, the man, as if possessed by the devil, broke out into a torrent of imprecations, and concluded by wishing "that God might strike him dead" for his folly in becoming a soldier.

The fatal words had scarcely left his lips, when a musket-ball that came from where we knew not—for we were marching through an open and level savannah—struck him full on the forehead, and he fell flat on his face a dead man !

We marched on, some in silence, but many more engaged in surmises ; for this startling event, which seemed like the judgment of Heaven upon a blasphemer, produced a painful sensation, even among the heedless fellows who witnessed it.

At last we halted, and taking up a position within two miles of St. Pierre, piled arms in close column of regiments. We now suffered greatly from thirst ; but on discovering a quantity of wine stored up in the lower rooms of an abandoned villa, I filled my canteen, and hastened to inform the good old captain of my company ; but just at the moment the Earl of Kildonan rode up to him.

"What is the hour, Glendonwyn ?" he asked. "I had my watch broken by a spent ball yesterday."

From the deep fob of his regimental breeches, the white-haired captain pulled forth a huge antique metal watch, which was known in the corps as "the chronometer," and replied with a smirk,—

"Exactly grog time of day, my lord."

"Grog time—twelve o'clock; ah, but we can have no grog till we get it out of the French stores; and I understand there are some thousand casks of Cognac and Leeward Island rum in St. Pierre. Only think of that! but to tap them——"

"We have only to cross a counterscarp—storm a glacis bristling with bayonets, and spike a few guns; so many a pretty fellow may lose the number of his mess before the grog is served out," replied the veteran, replacing his watch.

I now approached and offered the contents of my newly-discovered wine-store.

"Egad, this fellow Ellis is invaluable!" said Glendonwyn; "lead on,—no tricks, though, I hope,—for I remember when your father and I were at the siege of Belleisle, we dined off the leg of a young jackass, which was sold to us by a rascally sutler as delicate veal, and we never discovered the truth for many a day after."

Haystone, and several other officers, accompanied us to the villa, which, in many respects, reminded me of the residence of Eulalie; but its furniture had been destroyed by the revolted blacks of Bellegarde, and the walls were chalked over with caricatures of the late Governor Mazancy, and of the king, to whom he had been so faithful. With these were many obscene, rebellious, and political legends, such as, "Down with the Red Ribbon, with God, and the Cross! Live the sovereign people!" There was a representation of Louis XVI. hanging on a gallows; under this was inscribed,—

"Citizen Louis, dancing a court cotillion."

Another represented the unfortunate king, headless, with the legend,—

"Louis cranchant (*i.e.* spitting) dans le sac," a brutal phrase, as his head was supposed to be in the bag attached to the platform of the guillotine. Several runlets of wine were trundled into this apartment and broached. We found also plenty of yams and plaintains in a pantry, together with squash and Guinea fowls, ready cooked; thus showing that the last occupants had fled at our approach.

"Light dinner sherry," said one, draining his canteen nearly at a draught.

"Often denominated 'curious,'" added Bruce, with a wink.

"And very curious, you may find it to-morrow morning," said Haystone.

"A little brandy may keep it right," said the earl; and holding aloft his canteen, exclaimed, "To the health of the first men who get into St. Pierre!"

"Here's some port of the finest quality," said one of our captains, pulling a spiggot from a cask.

"Hark to Kinlochmoidart; he talks like an auctioneer. But, my dear fellow, I don't care a fig about the quality."

"What then, Glendonwyn?"

"The quantity—the quantity is the thing one studies most on the line of march."

"May we all be as merry this time to-morrow," said Kinlochmoidart thoughtfully, as he had a presentiment that he would fall in the Antilles.

"I am about to make my will," rejoined Haystone, heedlessly; "and shall solemnly bequeath——"

"What?"

"My castles in the air——"

"To whom?"

"My posterity—my heirs and assignees."

"Don't talk so foolishly," said Kinlochmoidart. "When we have such desperate work before us, Rowland, one ought to reflect—to think."

"What the devil is the use of reflection?" asked the thoughtless subaltern; "it would only bother me, and be of no use to the regiment or the world at large. No, no, my dear sir—time enough to think when I get old, and cut the service. Meantime, let us be jolly. A toast, gentlemen," he added, getting astride one of the wine-casks, and holding up his canteen; "Here's to the Lands of Cakes, of Leeks, of Puddings, and Potatoes—hip, hip, hurrah!"

We were fast getting merry, when Smith of the Royals galloped up to one of the open windows, and said:

"The brigade is at once to close to the front, and the Scots Fusiliers, as the senior regiment, are to have the honour of furnishing the forlorn hope."

"Egad, I thought it would soon come to this," exclaimed the earl. "Glendonwyn, order the men to stand to their arms. How many are wanted?"

"One hundred rank and file," replied the aide, casting a glance of affection at our wine-casks.

"State to the corps what the general requires, Glendonwyn, and bring the whole forlorn hope here. Smith, meanwhile help yourself, while time and wine last."

"Egad, you are in luck here!" said the aide-de-camp.

Captain Glendonwyn hurried to where our battalion were bivouacked near a thicket; but in a few minutes he returned solus.

"Alone!" we all exclaimed, starting up; "what is the meaning of this?"

"I formed the battalion in column," replied Glendonwyn, whose cheek was flushing, while his eyes sparkled with emotion; "and in obedience to your lordship's order, re-

quired a hundred volunteers for a storming-party. The words had scarcely left my lips, when, as one man, the *whole regiment* stepped to the front, and claimed the dangerous pre-eminence." *

"My Fusiliers—bravo, my Fusiliers!" exclaimed the earl, with flashing eyes; "who would not be proud of leading such men as these?"

"Some of our old fellows, like Sergeant Drumbirrel and Corporal Mahony, who had been with us at Belle-Isle and in West Florida, demanded the forlorn hope as their right; and so, to end the matter, I ordered number one company to prepare for the assault."

"Mine!" said Macdonald. "Glendonwyn, I thank you. Smith, please to let the general know we shall be ready whenever he chooses."

This officer was the grandson of the loyal and gallant Lieutenant-Colonel Donald Macdonald, of Kinlochmoidart, who was aide-de-camp to Prince Charles Stuart, and was one of the many who perished in the Government shambles at the Castle of Carlisle in 1746. He inherited all the courage and spirit of his race, and prepared at once for the task in hand—to escalade the citadel of St. Pierre, which was destitute of ditches, but had a very troublesome advanced work of palisades and loopholes, with a cavalier of ten 24-pounders.

When night closed in, his company cast aside their knapsacks, carefully inspected their arms and ammunition, and fixed fresh flints, while ladders that would admit three or four men abreast, were hastily prepared from the flooring and rafters of a house which we dismantled for the purpose.

As the brigade advanced for the purpose of assaulting the citadel in the dark—or rather, when a full round moon was

* A similar incident occurred with the 45th at Ciudad Rodrigo.

shooting its wild and wierdlike gleams of light through the rents in a mass of black clouds—a tumultuary hurrah, and sounds of drums and firing, were heard within the town. All this seemed perfectly unaccountable ; but Lieutenant Haystone, who had daringly crept forward to reconnoitre, returned with the pleasing intelligence that, according to an originally concerted plan, of which we were ignorant, Colonel Symes and Major Maitland of the 58th had landed on the north of the town with a strong detachment of their regiment, while five companies of Grenadiers and five of light infantry under Colonel Myers had assailed it on another point, and thus saved us all further trouble.

When day dawned, the union-jack was floating quietly over the castle of St. Pierre.



CHAPTER XLVII.

THE CONVENT OF ST. URSULE.

Two other episodes will close my adventures in the Isle of Martinique.

I need not detail to the reader the investment of Fort Bourbon, where General Rochambeau, commander of the French West-India Islands, made a desperate resistance, at the head of twelve hundred men of a revolted regiment of the French line—the old 37th, or Marshal Turenne's corps ; and how, at the point of the bayonet, we hurled Bellegarde and Pelocque, the leaders of the blacks and mulattoes, with all their dingy warriors, from the heights of La Sourrière, with the loss of all their cannon and plunder ; or how we

toiled day and night—officers and soldiers working side by side—to make a new road over the mountains, and to drag up heavy guns and mortars, till, finding the futility of further resistance, Rochambeau capitulated, delivering over the fortress, with five stand of colours, and all the cannon and arms. When Rochambeau came forth, he was clad in the new uniform of a general of the Republic—to wit, a blue coat, richly embroidered with gold ; a white satin waistcoat and blue pantaloons, also laced with gold ; a cocked hat and nodding tricoloured plume. The hilt and scabbard of his sabre were studded with precious stones.

From plainness, the sovereign people were hurrying into the extreme of military frippery.

With the shattered remnant of his forces, consisting of the 37th and the gunners of the marine corps, he embarked on board the fleet of Admiral Jervis for conveyance to England, as prisoner of war.

The two barriers of Fort Bourbon were delivered over with all due formality, and I had the honour first to do duty as an officer by commanding a Fusilier guard at the eastern gate on this eventful day. Then came the preparation of those lists, which, as poor Jack Rolster our adjutant said, “were to carry grief to many a heart, and perhaps poverty to many a home ;” yet, our losses in killed, wounded, and missing (barely three hundred) were trifling, when we considered the value of the territory we had added to the British crown. The casualties in our ranks were rapidly replaced by volunteers from the Scottish Lowland Fencible corps which were in process of reduction at this time.

In the store-houses of Fort Bourbon, we found great quantities of rice, maize, potatoes, figs, melons, and bananas. These, with pigs, turkeys, and wood-pigeons, kept us in fresh provisions for a long time.

The casualties of a soldier's life in these wild and perilous

times, brought me through many a strange adventure and mischance ; but few of these have impressed me more vividly than those connected with our campaign in Martinique.

At Fort Bourbon, Captain Glendonwyn discovered in the quarters of the late Colonel de Rouvigny, a vast quantity of plunder, among which were the gold and silver altar vessels, the jewels, vestments, books, reliques, and pictures belonging to the Ursuline convent at St. Pierre. These the general ordered to be packed up, and to be delivered to the superior ; and on this peaceful duty, with all the paraphernalia of St. Ursule piled in a cart, driven by two half-naked negroes, and guarded by twenty Fusiliers, I marched by the main road to St. Pierre, passing on the way all the ruined and dismantled batteries we had so lately taken from the French, and over which the young grass and weeds were already sprouting.

After a twenty-one miles' march, we re-entered St. Pierre about nightfall. All was quiet then, as our troops occupied both the town and citadel. Even the revolted blacks—our most dreadful enemies—dared not to molest a red-coat now, unless they caught him straggling and alone.

It is impossible to depict the state of danger to which the decree of the French National Assembly by abolishing all distinctions of colour in their Colonies, reduced their wretched planters in the Antilles. The murders and devastations consequent on this decree are incalculable. In San Domingo alone one hundred and thirty-five thousand furious blacks were in arms, destroying all whose colour was fairer than their own ; ten thousand of these marauders were killed, and twenty-four thousand were dispersed, but not before they had destroyed five hundred and forty-seven coffee and sugar plantations, and tortured to death in cold blood two hundred and fourteen white men and women. A *white infant*, impaled on a spear, was their banner and symbol !

Martinique, St. Bartholomew, Marigalante, and Los Santos, were all similarly convulsed.

I remember the terrible devastation of a village which the blacks of Bellegarde and Pelocque had ravaged. The little church of St. Martin had been shamefully desecrated; the images had been torn from their niches, the ornaments defaced, and bibles and missals were rent to shreds. In the houses, the skeletons, still with sufficient fragments of clothing about them to indicate their sexes, lay in veritable heaps, some with their sightless sockets turned still to heaven imploring the mercy or succour which never came. In the streets and alleys lay scattered bones, as if wild animals had gnawed and strewed them about. In the fleshless hand of a woman lay a blood-stained bible, which was open at the words, "It is better to be in the house of mourning than of feasting." A leaf was turned down at the passage which was thus impressed upon my memory. But to resume.

I proceeded direct to the Ursuline convent, which stands on the bank of a little stream.

As the French religieux were all royalists and in the interest of Britain, I soon obtained an audience of the Superior in the reception-room or parlour of the convent—an apartment having a tiled floor, and broad sunshades over its windows, the open Venetian blinds of which overlooked a beautiful garden, where the classic myrtle, the Provence rose, the geranium, and the violet, with all the flowers of Europe and the Indian isles were blooming. In the twilight of the evening, and in the sombre apartment (its walls were painted with a russet-green tint which rendered the hue of everything deeper still), I remember being struck by the grace and bearing of the lady, to whom I readily introduced myself, not without a strange undefinable emotion of interest, as this was the first occasion on which I had ever stood

within the walls of a convent, or made the acquaintance of a recluse, save through the medium of a circulating library. The grace of this woman's form, neither her black serge robe, nor her square white hood, which fell in sepulchral folds over her brow and under her chin, could conceal. She revealed only the lower part of her face, and, on seeing me, paused and seemed rather agitated.

"Madame," said I, "you must excuse me, if at this hour I intrude upon one, who with her companions, must have suffered so many terrors of late; but I come hither by the orders of Sir Charles Grey, the commander-in-chief of the British troops, to restore some valuable property—the plunder of your convent—which we discovered in Fort Bourbon, after its capitulation by General Rochambeau."

She now raised her head, and lifting her white hood, gazed on me sorrowfully, sweetly, and with features so pale, that in her sombre dress she seemed like one returned from the grave. Suddenly, a pang shot through my heart, and an exclamation escaped me.

"Eulalie!"

"Monsieur Oliver—I thought you would know me at last," said she, with a sad smile.

"Eulalie—here, alive, and in this strange dress!"

I held out my arms, but she shrank back.

"You see how wayward is my fate," said she.

"You are now——"

"A nun." She shook her head, and let her arms droop by her side.

"Oh, Eulalie——"

"Repining is futile—I have taken the irrevocable vows for life."

"For life! you know not the suspense—I may well call it torture—I endured, my dear friend—after discovering your

abduction from Barbadoes ; visions or cruelty and death were ever before me."

"I suffered much cruelty, but not death. Rouvigny relented—even *he* could relent. He brought me here, and I embraced a new life, as an escape from that to which he had condemned me."

"But was not this irregular—without a divorce? and consent——"

"Of the Pope you would say?"

"Yes."

"It *is* irregular; but in the total confusion of all our ecclesiastical affairs, here and in Italy, the Bishop of Martinique, though deposed by the Republicans, permitted it, as the best mode of separating us for ever, and perhaps of protecting me."

"Are you happy?" I asked, almost reproachfully.

"Happy!" she reiterated, in a tone of voice that was exquisitely touching; "what said Louise de la Vallière, in answer to the same question, when she became a nun: 'I am not happy; but I am *content*.'"

"Know you not that Rouvigny is dead?"

"Dead!" she repeated, with clasped hands.

"He died after the skirmish at Le Morne Rouge."

"May God give peace to his spirit—I have prayed for him many, many times."

"You are now free."

"Free! Oh, Marie mère de Dieu!" she exclaimed, while the tears fell over her pale face; "I have this day been elected Superior of the Ursulines. Go—go, Monsieur Oliver; for Heaven's sake leave me. We must meet no more; and better had it been for us that we had never met. You have won your epaulettes; fortune favours you, and I rejoice at it. Go on thus, my friend—my dear friend, and prosper."

"Thanks, dear Eulalie."

"In the path you must pursue in life Eulalie will soon be forgotten ; but never, while pulsation and human charity remain in her heart, will she forget to pray for you. Adieu, God bless you !"

She pressed her hands upon her breast. I could hear her sob ; I stepped towards her ; but she hastily withdrew, closed the parlour door, and I was left alone.

I never saw Eulalie again.

To know that she lived and loved me still, but was forever separated from me—that I dared not see, or visit, or talk with her, and love her in return—filled me with perplexity, irritation, and sorrow ; but there was no help for it now.

In all this deep interest no thought of marriage ever occurred to me ; in short, I was still too much of a boy to think of this. The romance of loving her sufficed for me ; but as some one says, "Did Petrarch ever reflect if Laura would make a good wife ? Did Oswald ever think it of Corinne ? Would it not weaken faith in their romantic passages if you believed it ? What have such practical issues to do with that passion which sublimates the faculties, and makes the loving dreamer to live in an ideal sphere, wherein nothing but goodness and brightness can come ?"

Then, as I conjured up the fair image of Eulalie, and thought of the deep mine of tenderness and love which lay buried in that living tomb at St. Pierre, I hailed with joy the order that sent us to the conquest of St. Lucia.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

LA FLEUR D'ÉPÉE.

IN the Grenadier brigade of Major-General H.R.H. Edward Duke of Kent (the father of her present Majesty), the Scots Fusiliers accompanied General Dundas, of Fingask, with the 6th, 9th, and 43rd regiments, to the reduction of the fertile and beautiful isle of St. Lucia, which we reached after two days' sail in hazy and rainy, but calm weather ; and the conquest of which we completed in three days without the loss of a man, as General Ricard, with all the soldiers of the republic, capitulated and laid down their arms. When Ricard came forth, he had more lorettes under his colours than rank and file—hence perhaps the brevity of his defence.

I consider it very remarkable that there was not a single British soldier or seaman even wounded at the conquest of St. Lucia, although, as Sir Charles Grey mentions in his despatch, there had been heavy cannonading from the enemy's batteries ; and in storming one near Morne Fortunée, Colonel Coote, at the head of four light companies, killed two French officers, with thirty of their soldiers, and spiked six pieces of great ordnance. In Morne Fortunée we found a vast quantity of plunder and military stores ; and every man got as much rum and sangaree, with yams and plain-tains, as he could carry off.

There is an old story of an English ship bound for Guinea, in the days of Charles I., having marooned sixty mutineers on this island, when the Caribs—its former inhabitants, fierce cannibals, who painted their naked bodies with yellow

ochre, and drew a stripe of vermillion from ear to ear—tortured, roasted, and devoured the whole of them.

After the capture we left a garrison and re-embarked; the left wing was on board the *Adder*, the right on board the frigate of Lord Garlies, eldest son of the Earl of Galloway, a gallant Scottish naval officer, who bore a distinguished part in the reduction of the French Antilles.

The rocky islets named Los Santos by the adventurous Spaniards, who discovered them on the festival of All Saints, were our next scene of service, and a bloody one it proved.

On this expedition, we were despatched with the 1st and 2nd Grenadier battalions, a company of the 43rd Light Infantry, and 500 picked seamen and marines from the *Quebec*, the *Rose*, and the *Adder*. The naval brigade were led by Sir George Grey, of the *Boyne*, and the whole of the forces were under the command of old General Dundas.

We sailed from St. Lucia early in the morning; and as "The Saints" lie only a few miles distant from Martinique, we found ourselves within gun-shot of them about noon, when the forests of Marigalante, then about fifteen miles distant, were drooping in the hot sunshine.

These solitary isles are fifteen in number, and were chiefly frequented by the crews of British and French ships of war, pirates, slavers, and buccaneers, for the purposes of careening and refitting.

Terre de Bas, the most westerly, has a neat little wooden church, a few thickets and fields of sugar-cane, with excellent creeks for landing.

Terre de Haut is the most easterly, and the centre is a large barren rock, the haunt of myriads of sea birds.

The atmosphere, as we approached, was delightfully cool, as these isles have ever a fresh breeze, let the wind blow from whatever quarter it may. As we drew near, they rose

under a dazzling sky, with clouds of that conical form, so frequently seen in the Antilles, floating over them. Birds of gaudy plumage flew about us ; around us rippled a sea of the deepest green, and in its wondrous depth waved giant plants that sprung from the coral beds a hundred feet below ; and little silvery fishes were sporting among this saline foliage which was brushed aside by the keels of the squadron, as we crept in shore.

The old palisadoed fort, on which Francis Lord Willoughby of Parham, unfurled the red cross of St. George in the olden time, still commanded the chief harbour ; but the French had added many modern works thereto, and all these we stormed at the point of the bayonet and demolished.

On these isles, the buccaneers and filibustiers of former days—the compatriots of Kidd, of Morgan, and the terrible Lolonois—were said to store their treasure, and to slay a negro or a prisoner and bury him with it, that his unquiet spirit might haunt the spot and guard the gold till their return. Thus a human skeleton above a hoard of Spanish dollars and doubloons has more than once been found in the creeks of Los Santos, as elsewhere in the Indian isles, and on the shores of the Gulf of Florida.

After their capture, the expedition sailed at once to reduce the isle of Guadaloupe.

At one in the morning we crowded into the boats of the squadron, and in silence put off from our ships in Gosier Bay. The atmosphere was still and calm, and the vast depth of the sea could be seen by the clear light of the reflected stars ; thus we could almost distinguish the *base* of the rocks in the bay, among the sand and shells, or weeds and coral beds, below.

Eight boats abreast, we dashed into the bay.

The earl selected a landing-place where the evergreen mangroves dipped their branches in the dancing ripples that

ran in silver foam upon the black volcanic rocks, and where the beach of the creek was covered by layers of those beautiful shells of silver, blue, and rose colour, the conch used of old by the savage Carib as a trumpet for war, and those marked by musical notes and used—as the buccaneer traditions tell—by the mermaids (and spirits of women drowned at sea) when singing. There, too, lay the mother-of-pearl oysters, which, says an old writer, usually lie at the foot of the great rocks, appearing at sunrise above the water “to gape for the dew, and when they have received a drop, closing their shells, and sinking down again.”

At the moment our leading line of boats grounded, the clear sky on both sides of the little bay became filled with curved lines of vertical light, as a storm of rockets, ascending from Fort Gosier on one side, and La Fleur d'Epée on the other, rushed like meteors of fire far aloft, and exploding, tell in showers of twinkling stars, the descent of which, enabled the French gunners on the batteries to direct their shot against us.

A large shell from La Fleur d'Epée (the strongest fortress in Guadaloupe) came revolving and humming through the air ; we could trace its course by the lighted fuse.

“Stoop !” cried the earl ; “down, lads, down !”

It fell harmlessly into the water alongside of the Duke of Kent's boat ; a second that came, exploded near our company. We saw the brilliant flash among the dark mangrove leaves, while a blaze of red sparks was thrown upward ; at the same instant a wild cry of agony announced that at least one poor fellow had fallen by a splinter, and Harry Smith, the aide-de-camp, lost an epaulette by a cannon-ball, which wounded his shoulder.

These little hints to be speedy were not lost upon us. We formed with the utmost rapidity by companies and by regiments, and moved beyond some ridges which saved us from

the fire of the two forts. I remember stumbling in the dark over the prostrate body of a naval officer, who was severely wounded by the splinter of a shell. This was the eldest son of the Earl of Galloway, "Captain Lord Viscount Garlies, of the *Winchelsea* frigate, who," as Admiral Jervis states in his despatch, "acquitted himself with spirit (in the landing) although he received a bad contusion from the fire of a battery, against which he had placed his ship *in the good old way, within half-musket shot.*"

In the clear tropical night we could perceive that Fort Fleur d'Épée was strongly situated on the summit of a hill ; and we advanced towards it through a gorge, Sir George Grey, of the *Boyne*, leading the naval brigade, and General Dundas the troops. His orders were that in carrying the place by storm *we* we were to trust entirely to the bayonet—the seamen and marines to pike and cutlass—and that no time was to be lost in firing.

The morning gun from the *Boyne*, which lay at anchor in Gosier Bay, was to be the signal for attack, and while the general was indicating the various points from which it would be made, and getting our forces into position, Captain Glendonwyn and I were sent forward with a flag of truce to summon the fort to surrender.

Through a thicket, amid the foliage of which the fire-flies were flitting in and out of sight, we made our way to the base of the hill, and when within musket-shot desired our drummer to beat a parley. The sound was immediately answered by a drum within the fort, and we proceeded over a bridge, beneath which a waterfall was pouring like a torrent of liquid silver. From thence we passed through an alley in an orange-grove, the old trees of which were interwoven by an all but impenetrable mass of green tracery—the fibres and foliage of the creepers that clung from branch to branch. There, too, crawled and croaked the

crapaud, or huge brown toad, the aspect of which was enough to fill with qualms even those, who in less than half an hour, would be rushing on with the desperate stormers.

On approaching the outer palisades, we were received by a guard under arms, and a number of officers, whose grimly bronzed faces and faded uniforms, were visible by the light of a large lantern. Around them hovered a crowd of blacks and mulattoes, armed with muskets, and wearing crossbelts over their sable chests or cotton shirts. Many had also hatchets and sabres.

“ Qui vive ? ” challenged a sentry of the French line.

“ A flag of truce,” replied Glendonwyn.

“ Addressed to whom ? ”

“ Monsieur le Colonel Du Plessis, commandant of La Fleur d’ Epée.”

“ Advance, monsieur l’officier — the colonel is here,” replied the sentinel, presenting arms.

“ Speak, sir,” said a tall, stern officer, whose long grey hair fell in the wavy fashion of the republic over the rolling collar of his plain grey great-coat, which was buttoned up to the throat, where his gilt gorget was suspended by a tricoloured ribbon. “ I am he you seek,” he added, saluting us.

M. Du Plessis was a solemn and gloomy man ; and his story, which we knew well, was a singular one.

In the year of the revolution and fall of the Bastille, he had been a private in one of the battalions of the Régiment de Turenne, but revolted. In a night attack made by the Chevalier Adrien de Losme, with a “ handful ” of the French guards, on a barricade in the Rue de Clichy, Du Plessis was involved in a deadly *mêlée* with the royalist troops, whose standard-bearer he encountered hand to hand in the dark, and on the summit of the hastily-constructed

barrier, Du Plessis was victor. Thrice he ran the royalist through the body, and as he placed a foot upon the fallen corpse, its face was turned towards him ; a ray of light fell on it, and the miserable man discovered that he had slain his—own father !

From that hour he was changed and gloomy. He made a vow that he would die in action. Even as he uttered this vow a shot struck his breast, and he fell. On examining the supposed wound, it was found “that the ball had been stopped,” as Dutriel (who told me the anecdote) related, “by a scapular of the Virgin which he wore. The mark of the ball remained on the piece of cloth, but Du Plessis was untouched ; and though he ever did his duty as became a soldier, since that night of horror in the Rue de Clichy he had lived with the severity of a monk of La Trappe.”

As these strange episodes recurred to me, I surveyed the general with some interest.

“If you come, messieurs, to demand a capitulation, your errand is fruitless,” said he.

“Such is my errand,” replied Glendonwyn ; “you are invested on every side.”

“Ah—we thought as much,” was the careless answer.

“How long, then, monsieur le général, do you propose to hold out ?”

“*Ma foi !* till death,” was the stern reply.

“Life is better.”

“Life is worthless to Frenchmen, if honour be lost,” was the somewhat vain reply. “Adieu, messieurs ;” and the wicket was shut in our faces.

With this reply we returned to the general, who said coolly, while he glanced at his watch,—

“Well—we shall beat up his quarters in half an hour. What sound is that ?” he asked, as a strain of music stole upon the calm morning air.

"The French band playing *Ca ira*," said I.

"Oh, very well; we'll change their tune when we give them gunpowder for breakfast."

All eyes were now turned to the *Boyne*, which lay in the bay, with her black hull, squared yards, and lofty rigging distinctly defined upon the clear whitening bosom of the water, which seemed, in the peculiar state of the atmosphere, like a sheet of milk, far down below the black groves and rocks of the island.

The ships' bells struck *five* in varying cadence.

With breathless impatience we awaited the signal!

Gradually a faint streak of light began to brighten the edge of the distant sea; a quivering ray from the sun, yet far below the horizon, played on the gauze-like clouds above it, and then a heavy boom, with a red flash from the frigate's starboard bow, made every heart in the brigade to leap in response.

"The morning gun!" said one.

"The warning—the signal!" exclaimed others, in loud whispers.

"Stormers to the front—forward, double quick!" cried the Earl of Kildonan, in a loud and firm voice.

Then, with that ringing hurrah which comes from British lungs alone, we dashed in masses towards La Fleur d'Épée.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE ASSAULT.

IN the twilight we pressed on, through bright green groves studded by brighter golden oranges; through the flame-coloured leaves of the wondrous *Bois-immortel*; through thickets of cinnamon, nutmeg, and clove-shrub trees, till we found ourselves at the base of the hill of La Fleur d'Epée, the sides of which were in a moment covered by the assailants—soldiers, seamen, and marines—scrambling up, under a tremendous fire of grape and musketry, round-shot, shell, and hand-grenades. The whole fortress seemed to be covered by flame, so incessant was the firing that flashed through every loophole and embrasure—over the stone parapets, and through the wooden palisades. Numbers of shells burst as they rose, revolving in mid-air, and their falling fragments killed and wounded several of our men; while, as they exploded elsewhere, pillars of black smoke and earth covered all the slope of the hill.

Led by the captain of the *Boyne*, the active seamen, with their pikes and cutlasses, were first at the outer palisade. Old Cranky, who was stuck all over pistols, like Paul Jones in the play, came next; and his solitary eye glared round him with grim satisfaction as he perceived his former antagonist, the earl, entering with him side by side, for he was too brave to bear a grudge at any man.

The French advanced work was soon taken—their inlying picket, or mainguard were all shot down or bayoneted; and many of our sailors, with the activity of monkeys, sprang into the embrasures—through which the levelled cannon were belching shot and flame—and there fought

hand to hand with the gunners and linesmen, who crowded together on the ramparts; while we, with the battalion of grenadier companies, dashed in the gates, and then a dreadful conflict with the bayonet ensued, for the blacks and mulattoes who mingled with the French line fought like incarnate fiends. The storming became a series of duels, in which many perished on both sides, and some frightful wounds were given by point and edge and clubbed musket, before they yielded, and threw down their arms in disorder.

Every shot found a hundred echoes in the cliffs of Morne Mascot, which overhung us, and in the distance we heard the sound of musketry as the General, Sir Charles Grey, assailed and stormed the batteries of Fort Louis and the Isle of Hogs, which commanded the harbour of Point à Pitre.

In the *mêlée* I have described we lost our senior captain, John Macdonald of Kinlochmoidart, a soldier worthy of the gallant race from which he sprang, and ever ready to lead in desperate work. His family having (as Glendonwyn phrased it) "come down the brae wi' the auld Stuarts," he was animated by all the pride and high courage of the palmiest days of Celtic chivalry; but a ball from the upper rampart pierced his breast; he fell, and the hand of his old friend Glendonwyn was the first to assist him.

"My dear Glenny, I am wounded—mortally wounded!" he exclaimed, and fainted.

"Carry him to the rear," cried the Earl of Kildonan, whose cheek was streaming with blood, having been laid open by a sabre; "he comes of a race that have seldom died on other bed than this."

He was borne out of the press, and conveyed on board the *Winchelsea*, but died of his wound soon after the capture of Guadaloupe.

Colonel du Plessis refused to surrender, and, after a severe

single combat, was disarmed and made prisoner by Jack Haystone, the lieutenant of our company. Just as he was leaning breathlessly on the sword of the French commandant, a ball shivered the blade in his hand. Haystone fell flat on his face, and at that moment a French grenadier, despite the entreaties of Du Plessis, was about to bayonet him, when Jack exclaimed in French, which he spoke fluently,—

“Hold ! I have a favour to ask.”

“Say it,” said the soldier, raising his threatening weapon.

“If you *will* stab me, let it be in the breast, that I may die at once, and lest my body be found with a dishonourable wound.”

“Rise, *mon capitaine*—I am one of the old Régiment de Turenne !” said the grenadier proudly and sullenly, as he flung down his musket.

The scene about the shattered gate as day dawned was revolting. The dead and wounded lay there in literal *heaps*, and among the former was my poor friend Jack Joyce, the marine, who had been shot through the lungs. In one place where a large shell had exploded I counted about twenty dead men all huddled together.

Elsewhere, I saw that many of the wounded retained the attitudes they had assumed when death-shots struck them. Here lay a man reclined against a bastion, with a handless arm upraised ; there lay another whose head and breast had been torn to pieces by a shower of canister. Close by was an officer with his handkerchief stuffed into his breast, and drenched with the blood of a wound from which the last life-drops were oozing, as his eyelids drooped and his eyes glazed mournfully over. Across a heap of bodies, a mustachoed grenadier of the old 37th, or King Louis’s, lay on his back ; the left hand yet grasped the musket, and in his clenched teeth was the half-bitten cartridge, the black powder of which was mingled with the blood and foam that left his

pallid lips together, matting about his black beard and mustachoes.

Our Scots Fusiliers suffered severely, and lost there many a poor lad who had first heard the drum beaten and the fife blown "for glory" at the village fair, or in the pastoral glen where his father's cottage stood ; but now, all gashed and dead, they would hear that fife and drum no more ! Amid all this horrible *débris*, I remember perceiving a French officer, standing a little apart from the prisoners, with his epaulettes in his hands. Lord Kildonan inquired the reason of this.

"To avoid the indignity of having them torn from my shoulders," he replied, haughtily.

"Torn !—by whom ?"

"Plunderers. I have worn these epaulettes at Versailles—ay, in the same quadrille with Marie Antoinette. I have worn them in battle against the Austrians, and I would not have them desecrated."

"Then replace them, monsieur," said the earl ; "it is not the custom of British soldiers to plunder either the living or the dead."

Mr. Williams, our minister, in his account of this affair, says : "Being the only chaplain present, I went up early in the evening, as soon as the action was over, to bury the dead. At the foot of the hill lay several of our seamen badly wounded. A little further on, under some tall trees, were several naval officers reposing after the fatigues of the morning ; their men were not far from them. Further on a party of wounded prisoners were brought in by our people, and at the gates of the fort lay a heap of slain, who had died by the sword or the bayonet. Within it lay a multitude of miserable creatures expiring of their wounds, and many of our own people in the same situation. In the midst of this his Excellency [Sir Charles Grey] was writing his despatches, at

a table on which lay an artilleryman sleeping, being overcome with fatigue, and the good general would not allow him to be disturbed."

After the slaughter and horrors we had witnessed, there was something quite refreshing in the humane sentiment, that prevented our gallant old leader from rousing the worn-out gunner, who had fallen asleep on a table brought forth from Du Plessis' quarters, for the use of the staff.

We had seventy-five killed and wounded in capturing this small fort. Of the French, including blacks and mulattoes, there were killed and taken two hundred and thirty-two.

Such was the storming of Fort Fleur d'Épée, in the island of Guadaloupe, by our losses at which I won my first lieutenancy.



CHAPTER L.

"SMITH" OF THE ROYALS.

FLUSHED by this new conquest "Hispaniola," was now our *cri de guerre*; and while troops, prisoners, sick and wounded were all re-embarked, and the squadron, after being careened and refitted, prepared to unite, previous to attacking that large and valuable island (an intention never carried out), I was ordered to convey thirty French civilians under a cartel to Dominica, while Harry Smith of the Royals, the aide-de-camp, who, as already related, had been wounded by a cannon-shot on our landing, was ordered to convey stores, despatches, and a few captured slaves to Jamaica. For these services, two large ships, formerly

privateers (*L'Etna* and *L'Ami du Peuple*), which we found concealed in a cove at Terre d'en Haut, were fitted for sea by the carpenters and riggers of the *Adder*. Captain Cranky sent a small but well-armed prize-crew under a midshipman on board of each. Smith who was in love with a girl in Jamaica, where he had formerly been stationed, accepted his duty with joy ; but I bade adieu to my comrades with a regret that almost amounted to a foreboding, and shifted my traps on board the *Etna*. He with his sable charge, and I with my jabbering Frenchmen separated, and with a fair wind we bore away from the rocky isles of Los Santos.

Neither of us sailed under convoy ; we had no fear of French ships of war, or privateers, as old Sir John Jervis had swept them alike from the Leeward and Windward Isles, and all the Caribbean sea.

L'Etna was a smart and sharply-built vessel, with a low hull, raking masts, pierced for eight twelve-pounders, and all painted black. While in French hands, she did great damage to our West-India trade. Mr. Stanley a midshipman of the *Adder*, commanded the prize-crew.

We stood down the Canal des Saintes, and after rounding Point du Vieux Fort of Guadaloupe, we lost sight of Harry Smith's craft, which bore away into the Caribbean Sea, while we hauled up for Dominica, on a lovely evening, when the sky was all of a warm lilac hue, which paled to blue as the golden sun sank down and vanished like a flaming shield.

After our separation, the adventures of both were very remarkable. Poor Harry's, at that time, made much more noise than mine, being full of romance, notwithstanding his most unromantic surname ; and a narrative of these, written by Haystone of ours, appeared in more than one public journal. As he and they are alike forgotten now, before

resuming the thread of my own story, I will briefly relate the strange catastrophe which befell the unfortunate aide-de-camp.

L'Ami du Peuple, after encountering a gale of wind which carried away her topmasts, reach Jamaica ; where Smith, after landing his stores and his sable detachment, hastened to the house of M. du Plessis, to whose daughter, Aurore, he was deeply attached. Many of our fellows at this time got themselves into scrapes with the pretty Creoles and Frenchwomen of colour, natheless all the serious disadvantages of making love when in a profuse state of perspiration to a pale damsel who could, to all appearance, remain cool as a cucumber, when the thermometer stood at ninety in the shade, and her European swain was in a melting mood in more ways than one.

Some time before, when Smith was quartered in Jamaica, Kingston had been full of French royalist emigrants or fugitives from the Antilles ; and many of these, from being persons of opulence and good position, by their flight and loss of fortune, had been reduced to extreme penury. Most of these emigrants were from Martinique, Marigalante, and Los Santos ; but by far the greater number were from Hispaniola. Among those from the latter island, were M. du Plessis, (brother of the colonel whose capture I have just related) and his daughter, Aurore, with a few servants in whom he confided, or who choose to follow his fallen fortune. After his arrival, these were forced, by the pressure of circumstances, to leave him, all, save one, named Scipio, a gigantic negro, to whom he was much attached, although a subtle savage, who, for a time, had served in the coloured bands of Bellegarde and Pelocque.

Aurore was a French girl who possessed a delicacy of beauty that seldom falls to the lot of her countrywomen ; but a West-Indian sun often works wonders, for although

barely sixteen, she was "rich in all the fascinations of tropical girlishness ;" and unmelted by the fiery skies of those regions, her cheeks wore a tinge of red, and ripe as those of any English girl at home ; but much of the beauty of Aurore was inherited from her mother, who was descended from the old Spanish settlers in Hispaniola.

In Kingston, the lively little French beauty had many admirers, but she preferred to all others Harry Smith, of the Scots Royals, whose handsome figure and face were displayed to advantage by his brilliant staff uniform. He had fine dark eyes, which generally played the deuce with ladies, who always averred they beheld "in them a deep expression of tenderness not to be described," and so forth ; yet I had seen them fiery and stern enough at such times as when the cannon ball from *La Fleur d'Épée* shaved off his epaulette and a slice off his shoulder with it. In short, he was the *beau idéal* of a smart and gentlemanly young officer, without a vestige of the fop about him—for he had seen too much service during the six years he had been in the Royals—"too many hard knocks" as the mess-room phrase is—to be guilty of such folly ; and so little Mademoiselle Aurore loved him with all her heart.

On his return to Jamaica, full of the ardour so natural to a young lover, Harry hastened to the house of M. du Plessis, but found, that though the letters of Aurore expressed an undiminished affection, a great change had taken place in the sentiments of the old planter, her father.

News (which, however, proved false) had arrived at Kingston, that the second division of the army from old France, destined to crush the insurgent slaves in the French Antilles, had reached the island of Hispaniola ; and M. du Plessis, elated by the prospect of a restoration to fortune and to his extensive estates and plantations, now avowed that which hitherto he had the cunning or the wicked

policy to conceal, a decided repugnance for Lieutenant Smith, and refused to permit Aurore to receive his visits.

Harry was as if thunder-struck ! He sued, he entreated, he stormed, and poor Aurore was in despair. She wept and prayed, but M. du Plessis remained as inexorable as any father in an old melodrama, and embarked on board of a ship sailing under a cartel, with his wife, his property, and all his black servants whom he had collected—the faithful Scipio included. Poor Harry sprang into a boat, and though still suffering from the effects of his wound, reached the ship, which was then almost ready for sea, and lay in the harbour of Kingston, with her cable hove short upon the anchor, her courses loose, and blue-peter flying at the fore.

With her face covered by a veil, Aurore was seated on the deck ; her head reclined upon her mother's breast, and she wept as if her heart was breaking.

Harry approached again ; desperation lent him an eloquence that he knew not he possessed, and he urged his suit with the bearing of a gentleman, and with passion, truth, and tenderness. Du Plessis stood with arms folded, and, after hearing him in contemptuous silence—for he seemed to exult in his power to crush and mortify a Briton—ordered him at once to leave the ship, and added some coarse and ungenerous reflections on his country, and on his faith as a Protestant. Finding that pathos and argument alike proved futile, Harry became filled by a sudden fury, and unsheathed his sword.

"Listen to me, Monsieur du Plessis, you are both insolent and hard of heart," he exclaimed ; "nothing but the love I bear Aurore, and the respect I am forced to have for you as *her* father, prevents me from running you through the body and killing you on the spot ! You will tear her from me—my dear, dear Aurore ! Be it so ; but thus shall she see that I can never survive her loss !"

With these words, the desperate fellow dashed his sword at the feet of the startled planter, and springing overboard, sank instantly.

Boats were promptly lowered to pick him up, but he never rose again.*

Aurore was borne to her cabin in a state of alternate insensibility and delirium, and in this condition she continued, when, on the evening of the third day, while the mountains of Hispaniola were in sight, Scipio and the other domestics, armed with knives, rose suddenly in the twilight, and, with circumstances of dreadful barbarity, murdered every white person on board, except the miserable girl on whom the "faithful" Scipio pounced as his own particular prey. The negroes then plundered and set fire to the ship, and, leaving the corpses to the spreading flames, went ashore in the largest boat, and, taking Aurore with them, joined the revolted slaves who were still in arms, and who, since the massacre of the whites in August, 1791, had made that beautiful isle a scene of death and desolation.

From that night all trace was lost for ever of the unfortunate Mademoiselle du Plessis.

* "His unfortunate father, who was in Kingston, when the news reached him, in vain offered a reward of £200 to any person who would bring him the body of his son; but it was never found."—*Scottish Reg.* 1794.

CHAPTER LI.

THE HURRICANE.

I HAVE mentioned that *L'Ami du Peuple*, the ship in which Smith sailed for Jamaica, had her topmasts carried away by a gale of wind. This occurred when she was somewhere off the long shoal, known as the Avis bank ; and the gale was but the skirt of a fearful hurricane, which we also encountered, and by which we were driven as far as to north latitude 15°30', and west longitude 63°15'.

The day when Stanley made this observation had been wonderfully serene, even for the tropics ; and as evening drew on, a warm lilac tint spread over sea and sky. The wind became variable—by turns stiff and light ; the sails at times flapped heavily, and the loose cordage alternately blew out in wide bends, or hung listlessly and still. At such times the *Etna* rolled drowsily, for there was a mountainous swell upon the glassy sea.

Stanley, the middy in command, seemed to dislike the aspect of the sky ; it puzzled him, and he frequently conferred with the older seamen of his crew, who, while acknowledging that they thought the appearance of the atmosphere boded something, added, they “would not have cared about it the value of a quid of bacca, but for that 'ere matter of the rats.”

It would seem that the *Etna*, when first found at Los Santos was infested by thousands of Barbadoes rats, all of which had disappeared when she was refitted for sea ; and the old proverb, that “rats leave dangerous places,” was repeated gloomily as evening turned into night, and the men of the watch talked under their breath, and rehearsed

to each other many a gloomy legend of dangers, to which similar disappearances had been the ominous introduction.

The wind was easterly, and, contrary to the general experience of those who have traversed the Caribbean sea, we found it increase in strength, instead of sinking after sunset—till it blew so freshly that sail was taken off the ship.

The atmosphere became thick and misty ; like a luminous lamp the red moon appeared for a time at the horizon, and the black and tumbling waves seemed to roll against its disc ; but as the haze increased we lost sight of it altogether. Dense black clouds came rapidly up from the north-west, and as they hurried along, they seemed to meet and be torn asunder by the contrary current from the east, which bore us swiftly on. The agitation of the sea increased, and now the waves, that seethed and boiled around us, emitted a strong sulphureous odour. Every moment the wind seemed to grow stronger, and appeared to blow from every point at once.

These phenomena, though not uncommon in those latitudes, made Stanley and his crew anxious.

The sails were still more reduced ; the topgallant yards were sent down, the topmasts struck, and every means were taken to make the vessel snug ; but she pitched and groaned fearfully ; while the atmosphere became more dense, more black, and stifling every moment.

I was sitting under the recess of the poop deck, when suddenly cries of astonishment, if not of fear, burst from the seamen ; then their voices were lost in a stupendous sound, like the roaring of a mighty cataract, mingled with the rolling of thunder, while a wondrous gleam of red and ghastly light overspread the sea, revealing every crested wave that rolled in long and watery ridges towards us, and every spar, rope, and block of the vessel's rigging in a glare as from a mighty conflagration.

By one bound I gained the summit of the poop-ladder, and grasping the mizen shrouds, beheld one of those terrible phenomena incident to these tropical seas,—a sight never to be forgotten.

About six miles distant, on our lee-bow, a mighty pyramid of fire was rising from the sea, as if millions of rockets were being vomited forth ; the roaring of the water that seethed around the crater of this submarine volcano—for it was one of those terrible examples which Kircher first records as having witnessed in the Azores—had a dreadful sound ; and the sulphureous ashes that mingled with the salt steam, and fell like a snow-storm on our deck, were so suffocating that two men became insensible. This thick white powder continued to fall so fast that our persons, the deck, the guns, the rigging, masts, and yards, speedily became as if coated with flour ; and the entire ship, in all her details, assumed a phantom-like aspect, as she glided on amid this terrific glare, which for nearly ten minutes overspread the ocean, and made it resemble a sea of flame.

Anon the light sank slowly down ; the radiance faded away, and then we heard the angry and hollow roaring of the sea as it was sucked down into the mighty depth of some submarine crater or vortex, the physical construction of which was beyond our conception ; but the reflux of the water boiled in hot and seething foam around us, while the spray that flew over the ship to leeward was warm, and became crusted salt in a moment, on the guns, booms, and shrouds.

Many of our seamen and passengers became almost paralysed by astonishment, and we found ourselves all but overwhelmed by the ashy torrent that had fallen upon us, and, amid which, in the gloom that succeeded, our figures seemed like those of indistinct spectres ; but now the roaring of the wind, and increasing turbulence of the sea, recalled us

to our senses by the natural instinct of self-preservation, for all the skill of seamanship was speedily required. The yards were squared, the *Etna* was set before the wind, and we lost no time in spreading every inch of canvas we dared, to escape from the spot ; thus, our old privateer flew before the rising tempest and the rolling sea like a veritable phantom ship.*

By the compass, the *Etna's* head lay nearly due north.

The wind soon freed us from the sulphureous ashes which covered our persons and the ship, but the crystalline salt of the spray lay thick and white as hoar frost upon the deck, the gunnels, and studding-sail booms alongside.

The wind still freshened, but a stiff glass of brandy-and-water, together with our excitement, enabled us to pass the night without once thinking of turning in ; and by day-dawn we saw land rising under a leaden-hued sky, from a grey and angry sea on our starboard bow, and it was about ten miles off on our beam about one o'clock.

"What do you make it out to be ?" I asked Stanley, who was gazing anxiously through his telescope.

"An island," was the curt reply.

"Of course,—but what island ?"

"Avis, by the chart,—and Avis it must be by the clouds of birds above it."

"But there are no trees visible."

"The birds lay their eggs in the sand. It is rendered a dangerous place by the number of rocks about ; a whole French fleet was wrecked there under the Admiral d'Estres. I have seen old guns lying on the rocks, when off the island

* In 1720 a column of fire sprang from the sea near Tercera, when an island arose above the surface ; and in February, 1811, similar events occurred at the western extremity of the island of St. Michael, when the flames are said to have "risen into the air like a host of sky-rockets, with the usual accompaniments of smoke, ashes, and noise."

in the *Adder's* boats. Keep her away a point or so to the eastward,—call the watch and stand by to stow the main-sail and jib."

As the louring day wore on, Stanley became more anxious, and ere long he took the wheel himself, for he was a good seaman as well as a brave young officer. The rocks of Avis soon vanished into the grey obscurity astern, and then I heard Stanley, after assuming his speaking-trumpet, bellow through the gathering gale,—

"Double reef the fore and maintopsails—stow the mizen-topsail! quick my lads, or they will be blown from the bolt ropes, or the sticks will go smash by the board."

Amid the furious flapping of the canvas and the roaring of the wind, I heard the voices of the seamen aloft, encouraging each other cheerily as they fulfilled their orders with all the speed and readiness of regular men-of-war's-men.

The sea was so heavy that at times we seemed to be rushing through successive sheets of snow-white foam, and the vessel began to labour greatly. Towards evening we had a glimpse of the sun. Fiery and blood-red, his mighty disc, shorn of every ray, glared at the horizon for a brief space along the waste of seething ocean over which we were careering wildly. We saw—but for a moment—a merchant brig under jury-masts, running on the opposite tack; she was lifted by the reddened sea against this glowing orb. For an instant her black outline, her masts, sails, and bowsprit, were distinct and clear; but the next she was swept away, and we lost sight of her in the dusk and drift as the sun went down, and the clouds of dun and fiery purple piled up like a huge bank, soon to be torn asunder by the wind, enveloped the place of his setting.

The pumps were sounded every half-hour; but the vessel proved tight, and no greater quantity of water than usual was found in them. As the twilight deepened, find-

ing that she began to lurch and roll like a water-logged ship, and that the gale seemed rather to increase than abate, I roused Stanley, who was exhausted and lay under the recess of the poop-deck, asleep. Just as he rose, a mighty wave struck the ship. The volume of dark and foaming water burst in thunder on her starboard quarter, and tearing the boat which hung there from its davits, swept it like a cork away into the trough of the sea.

"Stand by all hands to heave the guns overboard—clear the deck—heave over shot and everything to lighten her!" were now Stanley's orders.

By a rope at the breech and button, and handspikes under the trunnions, our eight 12-pounders, with all their shot and gear, were hoisted over the side and sent surging to the weedy depths below; while we were thus engaged, another dreadful sea struck the ship and swept away the long-boat which was full of live-stock, snapping like silk threads the lashings which bound it to the deck, and carrying it completely over the side, together with two of our men.

The gale was now approaching to a hurricane; but as the *Etna* sailed bravely, she was hauled to the wind on the port tack.

"Double reef the fore and main-topsail, and lower the yards down on the cap!" was now the order of Stanley.

In a minute after this she gave a mighty lurch, and rolled right over on her beam-ends to starboard, and thus she lay helplessly, with her mast-heads in the sea, the waves of which were roaring, bellowing, and foaming, as if each was rivalling the other in efforts to sink or rend her to pieces.

Clinging to the larboard side of the poop, I got upon the mizen rattlins, which were still a few feet above the sea, and there, though drenched with the spray which flew in showers over me, I had time to breathe—to utter a few pious invocations—to collect my thoughts and look about me.

I beheld, so far as the darkness, the drifting spray, and

the incessant motion of the foundering ship permitted me, a scene of horror, such as I had often read of—often imagined—but never expected to witness or experience. Shrieks to God for aid, mingled with the hollow bellowing of the wind and the roar of the destroying waves, as man after man was torn from the rattlins, the yards, or timber-heads, as the death-clutch failed, and he was swept away into the waste of water, or was dashed again and again by succeeding waves against the wreck. All this when viewed through the darkness of a tempestuous night was terrible—beyond all description terrible !

Wave after wave burst in thundering volume over me, confusing, drenching, and benumbing me ; yet I clung desperately to my perch in the mizen rattlins, which were now horizontal, and with each successive sea that struck the wreck sank lower and lower in the water.

Life I wanted now—life under any circumstances, however wretched ! Every thought, energy, and faculty became excited, and merged in the passionate longing for life, for self-preservation.

A portion of the maintopsail was still above water ; but a mighty wave burst into it and tore away the now *horizontal* mast with all its gear, and swept it far from the ship into darkness, and with it went poor Stanley and four of his seamen.

By this time I could only see four other men clinging to different parts of the wreck. I called to them repeatedly, but without receiving an answer. They seemed to be stupified. As Falconer says,—

A while they bore th' o'erwhelming billow's rage
Unequal combat with their fate to wage ;
Till all benumb'd and feeble they forego
Their slippery holds, and sink to shades below,

and ere long I found myself alone—alone on that surging sea and shattered wreck.

Men toil and struggle bravely, when love, when liberty, and, more than all, when *life* is at stake. So struggled I on that night of terror.

Clutching fast the wetted shrouds, worn and exhausted by long exposure, by want of sleep, and by excitement, I hoped the hope of the desperate—that, with daybreak, if the ship floated so long, aid might come; a friendly sail might pass, and I might yet be saved, and spared for years to come: yet what right had I to be favoured so specially, when so many poor fellows had perished? The brave, the good, the hardy, and the true!

Strangely enough, at that terrible time frivolous thoughts and trivial incidents of my past years came before me. I counted the rattlins on the shrouds, and watched, with a species of ghastly curiosity or vacant wonder, the snapping of the ship's gear in succession, as the billows broke in foam among the prostrate masts and yards, and shattered top-hamper; and then I would long and pray for the dawn of morning.

The hazy gloom around me was oppressive. I clung as in a dream, mechanically; I scarcely knew at one time whether I was asleep or awake, till suddenly the horrible conviction came over me, that the vessel was settling down, and *sinking fast*! The broken masts, all shattered now to their round tops, rose slowly and gradually from the water. For some minutes they remained at an angle of forty-five degrees from the surface, and then became more and more erect, as the vessel righted, and sank deeper in the sea, assuming, as she sank, her natural position.

Down—down she went, slowly, surely, and gradually, the waves rolling, as it were, in wild joy over her entire hull. I soon lost sight of the deck, and, as the water approached, I continued to ascend the rattlins until I reached the mizen-top. The storm was abating, for the bellowing and fury of

the wind were much less ; but this change of weather availed me little now, for I had barely reached the mizentop when it vanished, with the last vestiges of the ship into the sea beneath me, and I was tossed hither and thither among the waves. Blinded by spray, and haunted by a fear of sharks, and of the same death by which so many of my late companions had perished, I was not aware for some time that, by chance, or perhaps by that species of attraction by which two bodies or floating substances are drawn together in the water, a topgallant-yard remained close by me, till suddenly, with a sigh of joy, I threw out my arms and clung to it. Again and again I was tossed up among the white foam on the summit of a wave, and then precipitated into the black trough of the sea, twenty feet below ; and thus I was rapidly borne hundreds of yards from the place where our hapless ship had foundered, but still I retained my hold.

Then I found, as the dashing of the waves became less, that I was among some of those gigantic plants which grow from the bottom of the sea in these regions, being like prodigious water-docks, with stems eighty or a hundred feet long, and mighty leaves covered with brown slime ; and under these the *blue shark* glides ever in search of prey. If aught could increase the horror of my situation, it was being swept here and there among these giant weeds, with the incessant dread of being snapped in two by the teeth of the monster fish.

I was becoming careless, weary, and incapable of further exertion, when a wave, larger than any I had hitherto seen, burst like a mountain over me. I felt a mighty shock, and, while believing that all was over, became insensible ; yet God was pleased to spare me.

CHAPTER LII.

THE DESERT ISLAND.

WHEN consciousness returned, I felt on my face the warmth of a hot sunshine, and my first impulse was to strike out and swim, as if still in the ocean. Then starting convulsively, I rose slowly and giddily to find that I had been lying on a dry shingly beach, about two yards from the verge of the sea, which was calm as a mirror, and rippled like an inland lake upon "the unnumbered pebbles" and thick layers of beautiful shells that lay along this unknown shore.

Behind me rose steep black rocks, covered with green waving woods that fringed their summits, and close by lay the spar, by clinging to which my life had probably been saved. A few tortoises were crawling near it, on the shingle. After pausing to rally thought and power of action, I started to my feet, and looked around me. My clothes, a uniform coat and blue pantaloons with Hessian boots, were still moist with my recent immersion ; but the saline property of the sea water prevented it from causing ague or other illness.

By the sun's altitude, I judged the time to be about ten in the morning ; for my watch had stopped soon after I had been precipitated from the mizen rattlins into the sea.

The rays were scorching now, and they shone with a glitter and brilliance upon the grey rocks and palmetto groves above me, and with a transparency, which, by making them appear to vibrate, gave an idea of the heat being almost *visible*. At a little distance, some monkeys of the smallest size with long bushy tails were skipping about, and

I saw the gaily-pinioned flamingoes flitting from branch to branch ; but near me there was no sound, save the gurgling ripple on the beach—not even the hum of the smallest insect.

Far away to the vast circle of the horizon, stretched the ocean in profound calm. Its waters were of the lightest blue, and no spot or sail appeared upon their glassy and glowing surface.

Thirst now oppressed me, but I drank greedily of a pure, cool spring, that trickled down a chasm in the rocks, and then thought of looking about for the nearest habitation, I cared not whether it proved French or English ; though I had some dread of falling among the revolted slaves of either nation, or the wild Caribs, the aborigines of the Indian isles.

I found myself in a kind of creek, from which there was no way of egress, but by climbing up the cliffs inland, as the rocks descended sheer into the water, like ramparts of basalt ; so grasping the mangroves, the wild gourds, vines, and other luxuriant creepers which covered the face of the cliffs, I began to ascend from the shore.

I had scarcely attained an altitude of thirty yards or so, when I found my feet entangled in what I conceived to be the dried branches of a tree. After kicking vigorously, on looking down, imagine my sensations on finding that I had hurled from a shelf of the rock the bleached remains of a human skeleton !

This in no way cheerful episode, gave me fresh energy ; and I soon gained the summit of the cliff, which was about a hundred and sixty feet high, and proved to be the most lofty eminence in the isle—for it *was* an isle on which I had been thrown.

Here I looked round, and must leave my friend the reader to conceive the horror that survey caused within me.

On every side I beheld the girdling sea, but not a vestige of a human habitation. I was cast upon an island, about twelve miles in circumference, desert, lonely, and though fertile and densely wooded, uninhabited, save by the monkey and the tortoise ! On this isle I soon discovered that I had one companion—a terrible one—despair !

Some time elapsed, ere I could realize this terrible conviction. Desperately I toiled through the dense furzy thickets, which were interwoven by tens of thousands of jungly creepers, in the hope that some human creature—some hermit, a shipwrecked wretch like myself—or lonely Carib might meet me ; but after a fruitless search, wasted, worn, and hoarse with halloing, I returned to the summit of the cliff, once more to survey the sea, in the hope of beholding a sail. Hunger as yet I did not experience ; the time for it was coming.

The noon of day arrived, and the heat and silence were alike oppressive. The fierce sun, hot, clear, and cloudless, was at its zenith : the blue of the sky, amid which it shone, was so deep, that the eye ached on surveying it, or seeking to penetrate its far and wondrous immensity, while from the still, calm, and waveless sea the smoky exhalations arose in columns like thin white haze. The heat was suffocating ; to breathe it, was like inhaling the atmosphere of an open furnace. One marvelled that the fiery orb above failed to ignite the voiceless world below ; and then there was a silence so solemn in the sea and sky ! Everything was hushed, and amid the density of the primeval thickets, the leaves of which hung parched and still, there seemed to be not the smallest insect stirring. Around me there reigned that which a writer has styled, "The dead silence of mid-day, which is deeper and more solemn in tropical climes, than the deepest silence of night."

The whole day passed and evening found me still on the

cliff, sweeping the horizon with anxious and aching, keen and haggard eyes ; but not a sail appeared in sight.

I imagined that I must have been cast upon an islet somewhere between the Windward Islands and those of the Spanish Main ; and such, ultimately proved to be the case ; for this new scene of my adventures lay about $63^{\circ} 40'$ west longitude, and $11^{\circ} 40'$ north latitude, and is now known as the Isle of Tortoises ; so that our unfortunate ship must have been driven at tremendous speed before the wind and waves.

Guadaloupe ! oh, how I longed to be with my comrades now ! I envied even the youngest drum-boy in the Fusiliers.

Ever before me were the familiar features of my friends, with those of poor Stanley, and other ill-fated men, who had perished in the ship. It seemed incredible that all this had passed in a night.

Evening came on. From the lonely cliff I still gazed upon the lonelier sea. The rays of the setting sun gave it the aspect of a mighty sheet of flame, palpitating, rippling, and reflecting every hue of the sky above.

And night was wondrous ! The deep calm sea reflected the unnumbered stars so distinctly round the isle, that it seemed to float between two heavens—one above it, and the other below. The night was passed in restlessness and anxiety, or in dreams—uneasy visions ; yet I know not that I slept. I had ample time for reflection now, on my own conduct at various times. I often prayed deeply and fervently ; but with the knowledge that if I were once out of this confounded island, I would—I very much feared—be no better than before. Yet, it did not seem to me, that I had been a very bad sort of fellow after all.

I might live to be an old man, if food such as I could catch or glean lasted ; but what a life would it be ? The very thought was all but madness !

I might become ailing—seriously ill, and dying, lie unburied with my bones whitening for years ere some friendly hand interred them—if they were ever interred at all. Then I remembered the skeleton that lay below the cliff, and wondered what terrible tale of sorrow, suffering, or crime, it would reveal.

I had read of the bones of wrecked or marooned men being found, years after their death, upon the sandy banks and desert rocks of the Antilles. I had also read of white mummies being found on the African coast—the mummies of wrecked seamen, lying dry, shrivelled, and unburied on the hot sands, and as these recollections occurred to me, a gloomy horror of my situation settled over me, as each long and lonely night drew solemnly and drearily on.

I felt all the bitterness of ambition nipped in the bud, and of a future perhaps annihilated. This was not the lonely and miserable life, the lingering and awfully obscure death, I had portrayed to myself in moments of boyish enthusiasm.

The next day came, and I awoke to find that I had actually been asleep, and that day passed, as many were fated to pass, without a sail being seen.

I gathered dried drift wood and fallen branches in a pile on the summit of the cliff, to light therewith a signal fire in case a ship should appear, without reflecting that I was without the means of igniting the fuel; and on remembering this, I could have wept with disappointment.

Thirst I could quench at every spring; but the pangs of hunger now assailed me, and for a time death by starvation stared me in the face. I reasoned with myself, and after a time took heart to look once more about me. On examination I found plenty of shell-fish on the shore; plenty of land-crabs, fruit, yams, gourds, nuts; and thus, if by any means I could have lighted a fire to broil one or other, to

dispel the dews of night, and be a seaward signal while it lasted, I should not have fared so ill.

Tidings of the loss of the *Etna* would (I knew) ere long, reach my mother and the regiment. By the former I would long be mourned for as dead ; in the other, my commission would be gifted away to another, on my being superseded ; but these reflections were almost trifling when compared to others excited by my terrible predicament.

I had thirty guineas in my purse. I often surveyed them with a species of grim contempt. In that sequestered place, they were of less value than the wild vines that grew upon the rocks, the giant land-crabs or the brown tortoise that crawled upon the shore, and I would have given them all for a flint and steel.

On the southern side of the island, there was a large cavern, into which the sea rolled with a hollow sound ; but its aspect was so gloomy, that I had not yet curiosity to penetrate its recesses. Moreover, I had conceived a horror—a hatred of this small spot of earth on which my evil fortune had cast me.

How solitary were my days ! How deeply solemn—almost terrible, were my nights on that lonely isle ! The rising and the setting of the sun and stars alone marked how time passed.

“Time, where man lives not—what is it but eternity ?” and thereon no man dwelt save me. Means of escape I had none. There were no trees large enough to form a canoe ; and if they had existed, I was without tools. Even with a well-equipped boat, what could I have done ? In my total ignorance of the locality and of seamanship, I was safer on the island than on the sea ; and these convictions deepened the weariness and despair that sunk at times upon me.

Every morning I watched the beams of the sun gilding the

peak of a lofty rock, ere he rose from the sea ; they stole down inch by inch, and foot by foot, as the god of day ascended into the sky, till the waves at its base glittered in light. At eve, these waves were the first that grew dark ; then the light stole slowly upward, as the cold shade of night ascended like a rising tide, till the last farewell ray of the already set sun beamed on the sharp volcanic peak, and again the lonely isle " was left to darkness and to me."



CHAPTER LIII.

THE TREASURE SHIP.

NECESSITY compelled me to invent certain means for the sustenance of life, and for the preservation of health ; for I was daily in hope of seeing some vessel appear, either bound for the Spanish Main, or for the Bay of Honduras. Seven days stole away, yet not a topsail had appeared above the horizon, and I was afraid almost to sleep, lest a vessel might pass in the night.

The heavy dews so productive of fever and ague were my chief dread. For the first three nights I slept under a ledge of impending rock. On the fourth day I had found the fragments of a boat upon the beach in a place where they were almost hidden by the sprouting mangroves. Of these fragments I constructed a kind of hut, by covering them with turf and plantain-leaves, and therein I burrowed cosily enough at night, and secured myself from insects, reptiles, and the devouring land-crabs.

Hither I dragged the topsail-yard, and, by repeatedly

striking the mountings and sling, which were of iron, with a hard stone, I succeeded in producing sparks which ignited the dead, dry leaves, and occasionally made a fire whereon to broil a tortoise or roast a yam. A sharp stone served me for a knife when opening cocoanuts; the kernel was food—the milk was drink. I ate only to sustain nature, for my heart was heavy, and hope grew faint as day after day rolled on.

So strange is the effect of an overwrought imagination, that amid the awful solitude by which I was surrounded, I thrice imagined that I distinctly heard a *voice* calling my *name*.

In troubled dreams, my mother's kind face and sweet smile came before me, and I heard the merry voice of Lotty, who used to sing as constantly as the blackbirds for whom she spread crumbs every morning on her window-sill; and then I awoke to find it but a vision, and that those who loved me were far, far away.

On a part of the beach which shelved abruptly down towards the sea, I found, half-buried among the rank luxuriance of the place, a rusty cannon of antique form—some relic, perhaps, of the buccaneers, as it seemed much more than a hundred years old, and bore upon its breech, in Spanish, "*La Lima*."

In another place I discovered a more solemn memorial of mankind—a grave, with the remains of a mahogany cross at its head. Who lay interred there? Had he, or she, been earthed up in their last home by the survivor whose bones were scattered on the cliff, which, perhaps, he was daily in the habit of climbing to gaze on the silent sea for a passing sail, even as I now daily climbed it, and gazed hopelessly? This solitary grave gave me food for many mournful reflections, and caused a hundred vague surmises. Its solitude seemed all the more awful in that voiceless isle of the Cari-

bean Sea, and—I scarce know why—but I always shunned the place at night, lest I might see the dim outline of some ancient Spanish mariner, with peaked beard and slashed doublet, or of some grim buccaneer seated at the head of his own grave. Solitude and thought were fast making me timid and superstitious.

The dawn of day always filled me with new hope, but the fall of night with heart-broken wretchedness.

On a day of more than common beauty, I had grown weary of surveying the ever lonely sea, and descended from the cliff to the shore. As the sun went westward, the water assumed a deeper blue ; the lower part of my island became almost black in its depth of greenness ; but the summits of its rocks and tufted pines were tinted by a red glow exceeding any effect a mortal pencil could produce.

Wandering listlessly on, I reached the cavern which, as already mentioned, opened on the southern side of the isle. The cool shade of this vast recess allured me on this day to enter it. There was something solemn and majestic in its height and depth—its walls of rock, covered by luxuriant creepers, and its roof, a perfect but natural arch, encrusted with scorizæ, blocks of quartz, and studded by crystals, the result of volcanic fires, while long stalactites, white as alabaster, hung from the basaltic ceiling like the crocketed pendants of a Gothic cathedral. A kind of natural path, formed by a ledge of rock, afforded easy access far into this cavern, and along this I proceeded.

The purity of the external atmosphere seemed to increase the wonderful depth to which I saw the bases of the rocks, the layers of coral and shells, the huge, slimy plants that waved their solemn and fan-like leaves a hundred feet below me ; I could see the silver-scaled fishes that glanced and shot in and out of sight, while my own face and figure were reflected there as in a well—and a woeful aspect they pre-

sented, my tangled hair, my length of beard, my forehead, cheeks, and neck scorched to russet redness by the tropical sun.

Further within the cavern there was a strong and rank odour of mingled seaweed and rotten branches with the fungi that drooped from the rocks into the water.

To this retreat I often came to eat my dinner of broiled shell-fish and yams. Once, while reclined listlessly against the rocks, after my savage repast was over, and gazing vacantly into the calm depth of the water that rippled far away into the recesses of the cavern, suddenly a natural feature, which I had hitherto conceived to be a mere mass of weedy rock, seemed to assume a new form.

The upper portion of it was only three or four feet below the water ; but lay like an enormous boulder-stone, wedged between the walls of the cavern. I strained my eyes—could I be deceived ? No—it was a ship—the hull of a large but shattered ship, lying with its stern towards me, slightly heeled over to port, and covered by a mass of seaweed that waved in long green slimy leaves and tangles on every ripple of the water !

Here was a startling discovery and episode in my lonely hermit life.

I tore down and drew aside some of the thick mangroves and creepers which fringed the mouth of the cavern, and admitted more of the broad blaze of the noonday sunlight. Then I could distinctly perceive the mouldered hull of a vessel of some five hundred tons ; but of a strange and antique form. High-prowed and square-pooped, her stern and quarters bore still the remains of elaborate carving, though the greater portion of her starboard side and most of her timberheads, with all her gunnel, had disappeared, either by the shock of the waves, when she had been thrown by a tempest and the force of the sea into this strange place,

or by the gradual process of decay ; but her stern-post and six stern-windows were distinctly traceable. I could see the fish darting through them into the watery recesses of her mouldering cabins. I could see where one or two pieces of cannon, an anchor, and other heavy masses of ironwork, had sunk by their own weight to the bottom, through the soft and spongy wood, which, by the length of time it had lain in the water, was now reduced almost to a pulp.

This ship had evidently been lifted by some mighty wave into the chasm and bulged there, and now all that remained of her was covered by an entire coating of barnacles and seaweed.

A silent, voiceless, mouldering wreck is an object that excites melancholy thoughts at all times ; but in the situation in which I was then placed, there was something also exciting and solemnizing in the discovery ; and for a time I forgot even to look for a passing ship in the new and strange interest this old and weedy hull of antique form roused within me.

I remembered the brass cannon which was lying on the shore inscribed *La Lima*, and one or two guns that could be seen lying on the layers of shells beside the wreck, were exactly of the same form and size.

"*La Lima ?*" I pondered ; this was no doubt the name of the ship, and, as if to corroborate my ideas, she was evidently built in the old Spanish fashion, with those elaborate carvings on her poop and quarters, which survived even the times of Trafalgar and Cape St. Vincent.

I came hither day after day to gaze on this new object—new at least to me ; till its gaping stern-windows became like the features of an old friend, and I loved to fancy the story of the wreck—to people her deck and cabins with the life which had once been instinct there ; the Spaniards, with their slashed doublets, their mantles, ruffs, and rapiers,

their long and solemn Don-Quixote-like visages ; and then the fury of the storm, amid which they and their ship had perished—all perchance save the *two*—one whose grave I had seen, and the other whose bones I had so inadvertently scattered.

On the adjacent ledges of rock were several rings, bolts, and shapeless pieces of iron, from which the wood had long since decayed, and which were mere masses of rust. Among these I found a circular plate of brass, or some base metal, which had evidently covered the tomption of a cannon. The substance of which it was composed had resisted the process of decay, and a thick coat of verdigris encrusted it. On removing this, I discovered letters and a date ; and by a little industry traced—

“LA LIMA, 1647.”

“Sixteen hundred and forty seven !” I exclaimed, while memory came to my aid.

In an old book, over which I had often pored when at home in my mother’s cottage—a book which was given to me by little Amy Lee, and entitled “The Buccaneers of America” *—I remembered to have read of a great ship of Lima, which bore the name of that wealthy province of Peru. She had on board a vast treasure, subscribed by the merchants of Mexico and Panama, for the use and service of the unfortunate King Charles I., then at the close of his futile struggle with Cromwell and the Scots.

This stately caravel was said to have been mounted with seventy great and small brass guns, and to have had in treasure thirty millions of dollars, or pieces of eight ; but after leaving the coast of Peru for England was never heard

* “The Buccaneers of America, written by Mr. Basil Ringrose, Gent., and printed for William Croke, at the Green Dragon, without Temple Bar, 1684.”

of again. One rumour said that she had been last seen in the bay of Manta, twenty miles south from the equator ; another that she had foundered on Los Ahorcados, two solitary rocks which lie a few leagues from the shore of the Spanish Main. At all events, she perished when King Charles was a captive in the castle of Carisbrooke, and the gold she contained never reached him, or the cavaliers who stood by his fallen fortunes.

Strange emotions of mingled joy and mortification filled my mind, on conceiving that I had made this valuable discovery—joy, that a vast treasure, such as that which filled the hold of this old shattered ship, lay there in secret and only known to me ; and mortification, that if I perished on this most desolate isle, my bones might lie unseen and unknown for as many years as she had done.

If she was—as I doubted not—the *Lima* of the buccaneer history, of what avail to me were all the millions of dollars she contained, or which were strewed at the bottom of the cave wherein she lay ? Twenty times that sum, had it been mine, I would have given freely, joyfully, to be away from the place of my involuntary captivity, on board the smallest craft that ever sailed the sea.

In the miserable little wigwam—the veritable rabbit-burrow, which I had constructed, I lay for hours that night, thinking of the wreck of the great Spanish galleon, and picturing the great iron-bound boxes of treasure that were lying among the weedy ruins of her gaping timbers—treasure existing there perhaps for me alone ; and then I smiled mournfully, and almost with surprise at myself, and disgust, to find how, with hope, the demon of acquisitiveness began to fill my heart with the glow of avarice ; and even while thus smiling I resolved, with dawn, to visit the scene of my long-hidden treasure.

CHAPTER LIV.

A SURPRISE.

DURING the whole of the next day I toiled to form a species of hook, from the iron sling of the topsail-yard, with which I had been washed ashore—using a long flinty stone as a hammer, and another as an anvil. Then I conveyed this impromptu engine (which I had lashed with a tough creeper to the yard arm) along the shore towards the cavern, where I intended to use it as a drag and lever.

On this evening, as if an adventure was about to be achieved, I was struck (I know not why) by the wild, rugged, and beautiful aspect of this lonely island.

About the cavern-mouth, the foreground of the view was a rocky beach, on which the waves of the Caribbean sea were dashing in white foam, for the trade-wind blew freshly from the east. Outside, the breakers had that greenish-brown tint, peculiar to the sea when near shoal water that is full of tropical weeds. Beyond, rose lofty crags and rugged precipices, crowned by palm-trees, and cleft here and there into deep passes and fissures.

The time was evening now ; the sun had gone down into the waste of waters, but had left behind the splendid tints of a windy sunset still playing upon the ever-changing masses of torn vapour that hovered about the quarter of his declension. On the other hand, the moon, (to use the language of Ossian) “full as the round-orbed shield of the Mighty,” was rising, but obscured in masses of dark and opaque cloud, behind which her cold white lustre was spread over the sky, and glittered in sheets of silver on the rippling sea below.

It was amid a strange and wild, though not unpleasing combination of light and shade, sea and shore, moonrise and sunset, that I sought the weird cavern where the old weedy caravel lay ; yet I felt something impelling me on—a craving after activity and excitement—though I had a horror of the loneliness around me. All my strength was required in handling the topsail-yard, with which I made three or four vigorous thrusts at the side of the ancient ship and tore away one or two pieces of mouldered plank, covered with shells and barnacles. At every stroke the plash of the water echoed mournfully.

I was in the act of pausing a moment to recover breath, when a loud voice close by me exclaimed,—

“Yoho, brother—avast heaving?”

“A voice—a voice *here*—in this hitherto silent solitude!” was the question on my lips and in my heart.

Paralysed by actual terror, I remained as if rooted to the spot, like Robinson Crusoe when he first saw the human footprint in the sand of his island. Then a chilly horror—a dread of witnessing something supernatural in the cold twilight of that vast ocean cavern, made the blood curdle in my heart, for I was too much of a Scotchman to withstand the force of such weird ideas.

I turned slowly in the direction from which the voice had issued ; but instead of beholding the ghastly spectre of an ancient Spanish mariner, with a peaked beard terminating his sombre visage, a steeple-crowned hat and long toledo—the squat outline of a bulbous-shapen fiend in voluminous trunk hose, or the grislier spirit of a murdered captive, watching over the treasure, the tomb of which I was now violating—instead, I say, of any of these, I encountered only the extremely matter-of-fact face and sturdy form of a well-whiskered, brown-visaged British sailor, clad in a tarpaulin sou-wester, blue checked shirt, and pair of tarry

trousers ; and who, strangely enough, was tied by the hands and heels to the stump of a decayed tree, on which, as I afterwards found, he had been asleep, when, full of my own thoughts and purposes, I passed close by him.

"Avast heaving !" he repeated ; "come, look sharp, whoever you are, and cut and cast off these infernal lashings, for I am as stiff as if I had been here these three hundred years."

The voice grew familiar to me, and on coming close to him, I recognized an old—but certainly not much valued—acquaintance.

"Dick Knuckleduster !" I exclaimed.

"You know me—come ! that's devilish odd," he bellowed out. "A red-coat—a soldier too. What ! d—n my precious eyes, is it you, Captain Ellis—or what are you ?" he added with a scowl in his eye and a growl in his tone. "Now in the name of the living jingo, how came *you* here ?"

"A coincidence fortunate enough for you, I think," said I, and my own voice, so long unused, sounded strangely in my ears. "How came *you* here ?"

"Do you see that craft in the clear offing, bearing away north and by east ?"

"A ship !" I exclaimed.

"Ay, a ship," he added, gnashing his teeth ; "and may she never lift tack or sheet till she and all her crew are moored in the jaws of hell !"

On looking round, I saw plainly enough a large brig about twelve miles distant, bearing off under a full spread of sails, that shone white as snow in the full splendour of the risen moon, which contested for precedence with the fading light of sunset on the sea.

"She is a privateer, the *George Third*, of Bristol, carrying sixteen 12-pounders and three hundred men. Men do I call them ? d—n them for a gang of lubberly cowards to let their grogswilling tyrant of a captain maroon a poor devil

here as he did me ; and tied to a post too, without a chance for life."

"For what did he do this?"

"Mutiny—or madness he called it."

"When did this happen?"

"This very morning."

"Heavens!" I exclaimed, stung with disappointment.

"Well, I would rather shout on the *other* place," said he; "but what is the matter with you?"

"Oh, Heavens," I continued, without heeding him, "that this ship—this means of escape and life should be so near, and I ignorant of it!"

"By the captain's orders (here he uttered another tremendous malediction) I was landed, lashed to that elegant stump, and left, as you saw me, just six hours ago; but cut the rope if you have an atom of human charity about you, my jolly land-crab, for my hands and arms are swollen nigh to bursting, like the skin of a Jack Spaniard's borrachio."

"It is all very well to say cut, but where shall I find a knife?"

"At the lanyard—the rope-yarn round my neck."

With his clasped knife I set free this ruffian, whose presence, in sooth to say, I hailed at first with satisfaction, and whose voice was most welcome to my ear; for to this pass had a longing for fellowship brought me.

"And you, messmate?" he asked gruffly.

"Our ship, the *Etna* prize, was wrecked here. Driven ashore with this spar, I have been living a hermit's life, like Robinson Crusoe, for I scarcely know how many long and dreary days and nights."

"Give me your fin—thunder and blazes! Oh, for a drop of old Tom or right Jamaica to splice the mainbrace with? What have you in your locker?"

"My locker?"

"Yes; you know what I mean."

"Cold water that gurgles from the rock, drunk out of your hand or a vine-leaf."

"Bah! Father Adam's scuttle-butt would never do for me; but may I go to sea with a parson's warrant, if we don't find something better than that here."

"How? I should be glad to find something stronger."

"There must be some toddy-trees on this island. I'm cold as an iceberg in Baffin's Bay; but how'soever, I can blow a cloud of 'bacca."

Revolted as the companionship of this wretch proved, in some respects I was thankful, truly thankful for it in my solitude, and almost forgot the revelations of crime I had overheard when with him in the Sandridge beacon.

"Now, what have you got to eat here?" he asked.

"Yams, cocoanuts, tortoises, and shell-fish."

"What! not a devilled drumstick, peppered and done to a turn—a grilled kidney—cold fowl and sliced ham? No jolly salt junk, so hard and pickled that it might polish like Honduras mahogany? Excuse me, mister—never mind, you're no officer here, you know, so we shall get on as merrily as two Chatham Jews on a pay-day. I was once shipwrecked among the tattooed devils in the Marquesas islands, when on a voyage in the Southern Pacific. A regular Irish hurricane capsized the ship, and down she went to old Davy with all hands on board—all, at least, save myself and five others, who got ashore in the jolly-boat. Men eat their wives in the Marquesas occasionally; it is a matrimonial privilege, and rather economical. I lived with a fellow who more than once offered me a broiled rasher off his squaw, and very well it smelt, I can tell you, when broiled at the end of an old boat-hook, well seasoned with pimento, and spread, sandwich fashion, on a slice of the bread-fruit."

Knuckleduster concluded his reminiscence by a torrent of forcible invectives on the captain who had marooned him.

We rambled along the shore in the moonlight, and though I suggested that two persons could afford each other considerable support, situated as we were, and might achieve an escape from the island, which *one* would find futile and fatal, he lessened my hopes of relief by assuring me that the Isle of Tortoises lay far out in the Caribbean Sea, and quite beyond the usual track of vessels bound either for the Bay of Honduras or the Gulf of Venezuela ; and so we might remain there till our heads were white as winter frost, or the bursting tufts on the cotton-tree, without being discovered or relieved. But this fate seemed so horrible, that I could not realize a conviction of its possibility.

My new companion soon discovered a species of toddy-tree, the distilled gum of which made him partially intoxicated, and for many days afterwards he almost lived at the root of it, sucking the twigs, or with his lips applied to the bark, till he sank on the ground like a gorged leech. Under the influence of this new liquor, he frequently sung, shouted to imaginary ships, crouched and shrieked in the grasp of fancied phantoms and tormentors, danced horn-pipes on the beach, swore fearfully, and interlarded his conversation, and more particularly his ravings, with recollections of past days of crime, and always ended by an astounding malediction on the crew who had marooned him.

The solitude of my island had thoroughly departed now.

CHAPTER LV

WE VISIT THE "GALLEON."

ON the morning of the day after I had discovered him, he suddenly said :

"Now, mister, what game were you up to, when you were poking in that dark hole, with this old stick, last night?"

"Stick," I reiterated, "I do not understand you."

"Oh, I know you understand me well enough; I mean this spar, which I can see by a squint to be a stout topsail-yard."

I felt the necessity of being extremely reserved with such a reckless companion—especially the possessor of a weapon such as I was without—to wit, a long clasped knife; and so replied, with some caution :

"I was merely amusing myself."

"Amusing yourself?" he reiterated insolently, while a sudden gleam shot from his sinister eyes. "You'll excuse me, but I don't think there could be much amusement in the matter; so cut adrift all your quarter-deck humbug, and come to the point at once, my sojer officer."

"I am not in the habit of being addressed in this manner," said I angrily.

"Oh—I beg your pardon," he replied with a bow of mock servility, which was inexpressibly provoking; but, in a situation so terrible as ours, being willing to conciliate one with whom it was not worth my while to quarrel, I somewhat rashly said :

"Circumstanced as we are, perhaps it matters little

whether I tell you the truth or not ; but I have discovered a wreck there."

"A wreck in that hole?"

"The shattered hull of an ancient Spanish galleon."

"What! d—n my limbs!—a galleon—a regular Rio de la Plata treasure-ship?" he exclaimed.

"I have every reason to believe so."

"How—why?"

I related all that I had read about the great ship of Lima, and the corroborations I had discovered. On the conclusion of my surmises, Master Richard Knuckleduster uttered a series of imprecations upon himself, by which he meant to illustrate his own extreme astonishment and satisfaction, adding:

"Smite me, if it don't sound mighty like a galley yarn! Thirty millions of dollars, say you, skipper, lying in that hole? I can't overtake the sum, nohow; but it will rig our mainstays for life, and we may drink and smoke and die in our hammocks yet. But it is like what I have often heard. These seas and shores are full of buried treasure and craft, sunk in the days when the old buccaneers prowled after the plate fleets. Why, the very sharks have rings and doubloons in their greedy bellies at times!"

We repaired to the scene of the wreck together, and with frantic vigour Knuckleduster at once assaulted the old hull with the end of the topsail-yard, and our united efforts brought up huge pieces of old wood covered with shells and white coral branches. In one of these, after careful investigation, I found two coins, which proved to be silver *duros*, bearing the effigy of Philip IV of Spain.

Our operations, and the noise made by Knuckleduster, "yo-heave-o-ing," scared the sea-birds from their nests in the clefts of the rock, and they screamed and wheeled in and out of the cavern, as if in anger at our intrusion, or contempt of our efforts.

On beholding the two coins, Knuckleduster nearly went mad with joy, and as I could too readily perceive, jealousy of me. He swore, whooped, and danced, and rushed to suck his beloved toddy-tree, at the foot of which I found him lying insensible, and then took the opportunity of appropriating to myself the clasped knife, of which I felt such dread, for with a companion so lawless by nature, so powerful in form, and entrusted with such a secret, I now felt that my life was no longer safe.

On recovering, Knuckleduster immediately missed his knife, and after searching all his pockets, closely and suspiciously questioned me on the subject of its disappearance. I suggested that in some of his frantic gyrations round the toddy-tree, he had dropped it among the dwarf mangroves or long grass. He was forced to content himself with this surmise, and to relinquish all hope of recovering it, after a long and of course fruitless search.

Evening came on, and brought with it the usual buzz of countless insects; the red fire-flies began to glance about under the branches, the tree-toads, as large as tortoises, were croaking and squattering in the swamps.

As we sat together at the foot of the everlasting toddy-tree (the juice of which he could not prevail upon me to imbibe, lest it should stupefy me), we revolved innumerable plans for making signals to ships by day or by night—for sleeping and watching by turns on the summit of the high cliff—for escaping from the island by a canoe, if we could make it, and for returning to raise, break up, or explore, the old Spanish wreck. When these were all viewed over and discussed, I pressed Knuckleduster to relate to me, how he came to be marooned by the crew of a privateer, when I had last seen him at Los Santos, a seaman on board of the *Boyne* frigate.

After some delay, and not until he had sucked a score of

times at the intoxicating and manna-like distillations from the tree, did he tell me the following story, the oaths and imprecations with which he most freely interlarded it, being alone omitted.



CHAPTER LVI.

KNUCKLEDUSTER'S STORY.

"I WAS first in the smuggling line, and many are the good cargoes of Nantz and Geneva I have run ashore all along the coast between Hartlepool and the Spurnhead, in the bights and bays, clefts and creeks, known only to ourselves and our friends on shore ; till once, after a hard chase, our sloop was sunk by a twelve-pound shot that took her between wind and water, from a king's cutter, commanded by old Cranky, who was then in the Preventive Service. This was in Brellington Bay, off the coast of Yorkshire, and down she went, with all her brandy-kegs, and what was worse, all her hands aboard, at least, all except me ; so I was taken and condemned to serve seven years in a man-of-war.

"I deserted in the West Indies, and joined some lads of the knife and pistol, who manned a long, low, sharply-prowed polacca, that carried by turns at her gaff-peak the flag of every nation on earth, and had a long brass eighteen pounder amidships, that did some mischief, I can tell you, along the shore of the Spanish Main.

"Tiring of that, I sewed a thousand doubloons, the general stock of the crew, who were all drunk at the time, in the

waistband of my trowsers, and shoved off in a whale-boat, on a dark night, when the polacca was creeping under easy sail near the high headlands of Dominica, and worked my way home on board of an old sugar-ship. In England, between Jews and girls about Portsmouth, my doubloons melted like snow on the sea, and I was glad to take the keepership of Sandridge Light, to save me from the press-gang.

"We had some rare doings in that lighthouse, for a night seldom passed without stupid craft being lost ; for, d'ye see, the machinery of the lamps often went wrong—at least, so *we* said—and the devilish lights went out, at the very time they were most wanted. Well, we were burned out of that, as you know ; and though I escaped to Compton Rennel, Broken-nosed Bill and Mother Snatchblock, an old girl who was very fond of me, were shrivelled up like a couple of castanas on the hob of the galley fire.

"One night I found myself at Hull, entered as a foremast man aboard of a Quebec timber-ship, when there rose an outcry in the docks that press-gangs of the West-India fleet were out, and that the gates were all guarded by lobsters from the barracks. You know all about that too, for by you I was taken ; and I may tell you plainly that for many a day after that I vowed to be revenged for the trick, though I suppose you only did your duty, my young cockerel. You know, also, how I was taken prisoner and employed by that false devil of a French colonel at Martinique, and all about his pretty little wife.

"Well, within a week after the storming of La Fleur d'Epée, a smart French sloop that lay in the carenage of Los Santos was taken by Sir George Grey, of the *Boyne*, to use as a despatch-boat, and on board of her he sent the gunner's mate, with four hands—of whom I was one—to convey letters back to Martinique.

"The devil, who has always taken the greatest interest in

me, had surely the entire arrangement of this affair ; for the gunner's mate was the man, of all on board the fleet, whom I hated most, for three times he had caught me borrowing his rumbo, and had me triced up to the gangway for a dozen—three dozen for three glasses of grog ! Once he missed a purse, and as its alleged contents were found in my hammock by the three fellows who were now shipped with me, I received four dozen, well laid on with a pickled cat, and fainted ; but was well soused by buckets of salt water to bring me round again ; then I forfeited all pay and prize-money for six months. No sooner did the sloop put to sea, than all these things came crowding into my memory, and my mind was soon made up to skewer the gunner's mate and his three men, to plunder the sloop, run her ashore on the first land I came to, and then trust to Fortune and old Davy for whatever might turn up next.

“Catch me under a commodore's broad pennant again, thought I, if I can get this craft into my own hands, and make a clean run for it !

“We bent new canvass on the sloop in the carenage, and passed through the Rade des Saintes just as the morning gun was fired from La Fleur d'Epée and the union-jack went up where the tricolour had come down a week before. While bending the canvass we had a carpenter's gang aboard from the frigate, and from one of their chests I took the loan of a fine sharp axe, made like an Indian tomahawk. This I hid in my belt, and buttoned my jacket over the blade. We had a fine run all day after leaving Los Santos ; the wind was not quite aft ; but this all the better suited the trim of a fore-and-aft rig like that of the cutter.

“Evening was closing, and already the Point Jacques of Dominica was visible, and bearing a point or two on our lee-bow. We had the jib and staysail, the squaresail, the fore-and-aft mainsail, and the gaff topsail set. The

little cutter skimmed along like a flying-fish, and I had the tiller, when the gunner's mate—who was a handsome young fellow, by the way—came up from the cabin, and swore that I was not keeping her full enough.

"I said something in reply—I don't know what—belike it was 'Belay your jawing-tackle,' not being in a particularly pleasant mood ; but he snatched the coil of a rope off a belaying-pin, cast a knot upon it, and laid it across my back five or six times, saying,—

"'D—n you ! you rebellious lubber ; do you dare to reply to me ? Look out, sir, or by —— I'll have you keel-hauled from the yardarm, to teach you to keep your eyes open !'

"I knew that the gunner's mate was a tearing, swearing fellow, who did his duty well, and valued no man a quid of tobacco ; so this time I did not reply ; but I thought much, and, slipping my right hand into the breast of my pea-jacket, felt the sharp edge of my little hatchet, and whistled with quiet satisfaction, while the gunner's mate, after giving a glance aloft, descended into the cabin.

"On peeping through the skylight, I could see that he was writing by the glimmer of a ship-lantern, and he often paused to look at a portrait. It represented an old lady—his mother, as I afterwards learned. He cut off a lock of his hair with his clasped knife, and put it on the table, to send home to the old woman, no doubt. At this moment two of my messmates were below ; the third was sitting in the lee-bow, smoking quietly, so I lashed the helm with the tiller-rope, and stole softly behind him.

"'Jack,' said I, 'do you think that *is* Point Jacques of Dominica, for I have my doubts about it ?'

"He started, and turning to me, asked if I was unwell, and offered to take the helm, or ask a glass of grog for me ; there was something in my eyes or face which startled him,

and I *felt* that they had an expression scarcely human. Yet my tone and manner were calm and collected, though my heart was raging like a hell within my breast.

“‘Look!’ I repeated; ‘is that Point Jacques with the sulphur mountain over it!’

“He turned his eyes towards the coast.

“At that moment I swung my axe aloft—it crashed into the back part of his skull, and Jack fell prone with his face upon the gunnel; I grasped the axe with my teeth, seized him by the legs, and shot him over into the sea, where he sank like a stone.

“This made some noise, however, and one of those below put up his head inquiringly from the fore-hatch; just as he did so, I rushed at him with a yell, and by one blow of the axe cleft him to the nose! He sank to the foot of the ladder on the deck below. On seeing this, his messmate, supposing that the cutter was boarded by French or Caribs, came rushing up with his cutlass, but I met him with one fell swing of my weapon. Missing his head, it fell on his collar-bone; his sword-arm dropped; he sank against the combing of the hatchway, and glared at me with a ghastly and bewildered expression; but as he attempted to crawl on deck, I soon despatched him by repeated blows—for now when I saw blood, mine was boiling like liquid lava.

“With another yell of mad triumph I dragged his body to leeward, shot it into the sea, and it vanished amidst the white foam that smoked under the counter of the cutter, as she flew from wave to wave.

(At this point of his dreadful narrative, Knuckleduster’s face glowed purple with excitement; his eyes glared like two hot cinders; his thick coarse nostrils were dilated, and he bit his swollen lips to repress the passionate triumph of the infernal fury he seemed to feel again.)

“As he fell into the sea, my axe dropped with him. If

the gunner's mate came up with cutlass or pistols, a death as sudden as any I had bestowed would be my reward ! I thought of dropping a cold shot on his head through the skylight, forgetting for the moment that the cutter was unarmed. Then I caught up a handspike from the windlass, and was rushing aft just as he stepped on deck. The first view he had of me, and the blood with which I was covered, seemed to explain everything. He glanced round for a weapon, and then sprang forward, as full of confidence as a frigate with a free sheet, and tried to grapple, barehanded, with me ; but retiring a pace or two, to give the handspike full swing, I hurled it again and again on his head and shoulders till he sank powerless and motionless at my feet. Then I tore a ring from his finger, and a watch and purse from his pocket, as being things that were of no use to him or the fishes either ; and as he was too heavy for me to lift, I triced up the lee quarter-board, and shoved him through it into the sea.

“ Dead men tell no tales—and the fourth deed was done !

“ I was alone in the cutter—alone on the sea !

“ To be alone was to be independent ; to be independent was to be free. I felt no compunction for what I had done ; these men were my enemies, and I could have slain them all over again had the double deed been to do.

“ I descended to the little cabin, where the lantern was still burning. On the table lay the letter which the gunner's mate had been writing, and the ink was yet wet on it. It was to his old mother at Greenwich, saying all his back pay and prize-money were lodged to her account in London ; to keep her heart easy and be jolly, as she would have him by her side again, and as Sir John Jervis had promised him promotion for his conduct at *La Fleur d'Épée* ; that all he could send home was a lock of hair for her and Emmy, and

a great deal more bosh of the same kind ; so I laughed as I read, and tore it to fritters.

“ What ! you groan, do you, Mr. Ellis ?—groan like the wind sighing through a lee scupper or the galley funnel ! Why, you swab of a sojer, we are both fighting men, only that you fight for honour and humbug, I for plunder and pay !

“ In a locker I found a bottle of brandy, two case-bottles of skiedam, and some wine ; so I set to, and drank from them all in succession—raw, with the jacket off, none of your grog for me—till the whole cabin seemed full of cloven heads, gashed faces, and gunner’s mates ; and then sinking on the deck, I remembered no more of that night, or it may be of the next day—or, for aught I know, of the next after that.

“ On recovering, I found myself in the dark, and half in the water. Thirst—thirst, as if the flames of that hot place the parsons preach about were in my throat, and in my lower spirit-room, assailed me. I groped about for some time without being able to comprehend my circumstances, or where the deuce I was. By the motion and sounds I knew that I was on board some craft, and at sea ; but *how*—for her strange position puzzled me. I groped about, half gasping, the while for air, and, as I felt with my hands the details of the woodwork around, gradually, but surely, a horrible conviction came over me. I was still in the cabin of the sloop, but its position was *inverted* ; the upper deck was below me, and the lower deck above ! I was in mirk darkness, and felt the water rising above my knees. There was a sucking, gurgling sound with every heave of the sea ; but this could be easily accounted for by the air, which was confined in the hull of the cutter, and had no means of escape.

“ I now understood the whole catastrophe !

"While I had been in a state of stupor, a breeze or squall, mayhap the same squall that foundered your ship, had arisen. Left to herself, the cutter's sails had been thrown aback, her main-boom had jibed ; she had been *capsized*, and was now floating, keel upmost, in the sea ; floating, I knew not where, with me imprisoned helplessly and dying of hunger, thirst, terror, and suffocation, (but I cannot add remorse,) in her dark, inverted, and waterlogged cabin !

"I felt the fishes, cold and slimy, darting about and touching me. What, if a shark, even of the smallest size, found its way *up* the companion hatch into my dreadful floating tomb ! The idea nearly drove me mad. Amidst water which I dared not drink, I endured the most maddening thirst, and envied the dead body of my second victim, which, or shall I say *whom*, I supposed to be floating in the forehold.

"How long I had been in this wretched condition there were no means of determining, neither could I distinguish day from night. I searched about for the bottles that were left on the cabin table, resolving to drink myself into a state of stupefaction, from which I might never wake more ; but sought in vain. I found the locker like everything else, *inverted*, and, of course, empty.

"My thirst was an overwhelming agony ; moreover, I endured great cold ; my limbs were cramped, and hideous faces, smeared with blood, winked their goggle eyes and grinned at me, amid the dense obscurity which was almost palpable.

"At times it seemed as if the capsized cutter sank deeper in the water ; and on these occasions I dared neither move, breathe, or think ; for though I had recklessly slain others, I was haunted by an awful dread of dying there.

"Once I thought that the jaws of a huge shark yawned

beside me, and in a paroxysm of terror, I swooned, as they seemed to engulf me.

"On recovering, some time after, half-choked and half-drowned, I started up with a howl of despair, and beat madly against the cabin wall with my clenched hands, till they were covered with blood and bruises. Was I deceived, or was it reality? A sound outside seemed to reply.

"I heard a kind of grating noise without, and then the blows of some instrument—an axe or hammer—rang again and again like thunder in my excited ears.

"The blows were redoubled, and I continued to knock and to shout. At last a plank of the inner sheathing was started in the side of one of the starboard berths, and a vivid stream of light burst blindingly into the darkness around me. Springing to it, I thrust up my head and found alongside a boat full of men, who had seen the cap-sized cutter from their vessel, and had come off to reconnoitre. They had fortunately heard me shouting or hammering in my prison, and by means of a hatchet proceeded to investigate the cause of this noise.

"They drew me out, and then judge of my horror, when the first man whose eyes encountered mine, was the *gunner's mate*, sitting pale as death in the stern-sheets of the boat with the tiller-ropes in his hands.

"On beholding him, I tried to leap into the sea, but was seized and lashed to the boat-thwarts by a rope, and while the foundered cutter, on the air escaping as if with a heavy sigh, from her cabin, filled and sank out of sight, I was conveyed on board the vessel of my deliverers. She proved to be the *George Third* of Bristol a privateer brig armed with sixteen 12-pounders, and her crew had picked up the gunner's mate a quarter of an hour after I had chucked him overboard, stunned but *not* killed.

"I knew that my life was not worth a tester now unless

I played a desperate game, and I played it well ; for I performed so many pranks, that conceiving they were produced by insanity and remorse, instead of reeving me up to the foreyard-arm as the gunner's mate urged, the privateersmen *marooned* me on the first land they came to, my old enemy only obtaining leave to bind me well to the stump at which you found me ; and now, as I am thirsty after this precious yarn of blood and desperation—this long talkee-talkee as the niggers call it—I shall have one more suck at my old toddy-tree, and then turn into my hole for the night.”

Such was the bare narrative of crime related to me by Knuckleduster. He was certainly a pleasant companion to have on that lonely island, and I had no reason to doubt the veracity of his atrocious revelations, for he was too inebriated to invent—if he had the power of invention—and situated as we were, on that wild Caribean isle, he cared nothing for me or my opinion of him.

CHAPTER LVII.

A SAIL IN SIGHT!

I HAD been more than a month and a half in my solitude when the time of my deliverance drew near.

Miserable though my situation had been when alone on the island, on consideration I believed myself more comfortable than with such a companion. His aspect now annoyed, his conversation disgusted, and his bearing at times enraged me.

I remember him telling me of a mutinous seaman, who had been marooned by pirates on a lonely island in the great Gulf of Mexico. There he lived for years, till hope had died within him, till his hair became grey, and he had long ceased to look for a passing ship.

One morning when gathering nuts and herbs for his usual repast, he stumbled over a mound of earth—or what appeared to be a grave—a newly-made grave; for the mound was freshly heaped up. He rushed breathlessly to his look-out place on the highest eminence of his isle, and swept the sea by an anxious and haggard glance.

No ship was visible upon its waters—no boat was near the coast, and the Mexican isle was as solitary and voiceless, as it had been for many long and weary years.

Full of strange thoughts and superstitious fears, he returned to the grave or gathered heap upon the shore, and, after long consideration, scraped the loose mould aside by his hands, and there, about three feet below the surface, he found the body of a young girl, of great beauty, clad in the dress of the living, but interred without coffin or shroud. Her face was covered only by her rich auburn hair, which

was in great profusion, and she had a gold wedding-ring upon the usual finger of the left hand.

What terrible mystery was this! how had she been brought there, and by whom interred? The marooned man never could discover either, but he sighed bitterly and wept, as he covered up the grave of the beautiful unknown. Her sad pale face haunted him from that hour by day and by night, so that ultimately he became insane, and when found by the crew of a vessel from Tortugas, bound for the Bay of Honduras, he refused to leave the island, "and perhaps is there still, for all that I know," added Knuckle-duster, most of whose stories were extremely the reverse of lively.

Conceiving himself quite my equal—as we were beyond the pale of all discipline—he behaved in such a manner at times, that I felt inclined to knock him down; but prudently restrained the impulse, as he was more powerfully-built, and more matured in form and years than I, and was also skilful in the art of "bruising," a science of which I was totally ignorant. If I spoke briefly or haughtily when he bored or wearied me, he would retort by an oath, or make such a reply as this—

"Come, come! no quarter-deck airs here, my sojer officer. I'll teach you that Jack is as good as his master, and better, perhaps, for the matter o' that. Oh ho; we are indignant are we! A little pot gets soon hot; but don't forget how I ropesended you, when you were in the lighthouse, like a young bear, with all your sorrows to come."

His whole thoughts ran on the sunken wreck; the idea of leaving the island, without conveying in some manner its hidden treasures with him, never left his avaricious mind for a moment; and, ere long, I could perceive how jealously he regarded me as the discoverer of the vessel, and the partner or sharer of the secret of her character and

existence. Often when awaking suddenly, in the alternate watch, which we agreed to keep on the summit of the cliff, I found him regarding—not the ocean, but me, with a sinister and strange expression in his eyes, which made me thankful for the foresight that led me to secure his *knife*, which I constantly wore in my breast-pocket.

For several days about this time, the wind blew a hurricane, and I was not without hopes, that it might send some vessel to our relief.

Innumerable trifles seemed to confirm my suspicions of Knuckleduster, and to indicate the necessity of being on my guard ; while the tales of blood and piracy he related with such perfect coolness and equanimity, haunted me continually, and made me feel bitterly the humiliation of sharing my solitude with a wretch so vile.

If dreams are meant to be the forerunners of events, or to serve as warnings to us, I was not without them.

I remember falling asleep under a plantain-tree, on the summit of the cliff, as we sat there together one afternoon, on the look-out as usual.

I dreamt that he and I were taken off the island by a ship ; but the joy inspired by this release was considerably lessened on my discovering that she was a pirate, and manned by ruffians who were his friends and former messmates.

As we bore away to sea, I saw them in close conversation ; I heard their ominous words, and saw their scowling eyes fixed furtively on me, while Knuckleduster told them, that I alone could reveal to the world, where the Spanish treasure lay, and unanimously they resolved to throw me overboard. In vain did I struggle, intreat, offer bribes, and promise to relinquish all interest in the sunken ship or her millions of pieces of eight ! Strong hands were upon my arms—and huge, bony fingers clutched my throat. I was

hurried to the ship's side, and saw the white foam running under the counter to leeward, as she swept along with a spanking breeze upon her quarter. And now, methought that Knuckleduster, with a refinement of cruelty peculiarly his own, ordered me to be sewn up in a hammock and buried alive in the sea.

No sooner was this proposed, than amid brutal shouts and jests it was done ; my body was straightened, lashed, round with a rope, tied up like a mummy, and while the pirate's black flag, with its skull and cross-bones, was waved in mockery over me, I saw two 32-pound shots taken from the combing of a hatchway and tied to my heels. I shall never forget the agony of that fancied peril ! The beads of perspiration were rolling from my brow.

A mock burial service was read over me. I heard the solemn words pronounced, which until the resurrection consigned my body to the deep !

A dozen of hands now seized the grating whereon I lay, to cast me overboard to leeward, when the report of a cannon, which the pirates fired as a signal, made me bound from the turf on which I had been sleeping.

I was now awake—quite awake on the green turf ; but as if to continue the dream and perpetuate its agony, I heard distinctly, at the instant of endeavouring to rise, the boom of a *real cannon* tingling in my ears, and felt the hard coarse hand of Knuckleduster on my throat—his knee upon my chest, and saw his fierce and murderous eyes glaring into mine, like those of a cobra capello.

A ship was off the coast, and now the double time of deliverance, or of death, was at hand !

During my sleep and my terrible dream, this ship had been approaching, and, as the wretch, my companion, watched her, he resolved to silence me for ever, that I might neither reveal his crimes or the secret of the sunken galleon to

others, and having no weapon, had resorted to strangulation by the savage strength of two powerful hands and arms.

The bewilderment caused by my recent dream was still upon me, and rendered my resistance feeble at first. Already he had clutched all that remained of my tattered neckcloth, and given it a fierce wrench by his muscular right hand ; then, when my head was turned round by the agony of this compression, as if to increase the bitterness of dying helplessly at the mercy of such a wretch, I could see from the summit of the cliff, about four miles off on the blue evening waters, a large frigate under a full spread of canvas, approaching the island.

To perish thus in sight of relief—to be destroyed as it were, on the threshold of home—after all I had endured, endured me, though little more than a lad, with an unnatural strength ; thus I struggled wildly and madly, but bravely, with my would-be assassin.

Unlike my bearing in my recent dream, I neither entreated, threatened, nor promised secrecy, or mercy ; but summoned every energy to defend and preserve my life ! Raising me by the throat, he strove to dash my head upon the earth to stun me ; but in attempting this, he overbalanced himself, fell, and in a moment I was above him !

He kicked, wrestled, bit, and howled like a fierce animal, as we rolled together down the back of the cliff out of sight of the coming ship, and there the wild shrubbery among which we floundered pell-mell, separated us ; but after breathing for a moment, we arose and approached each other to grapple again, and, as it proved, on the giddy verge of a deep chasm in the rocks—a rent by which, in some stern throe of Nature, this tall cliff had been split from its summit to its base below the waters of the sea.

If the partial strangulation had enfeebled me, the blows and buffets under which I smarted—the love of life, and

above all, my anxiety to make some signal to the nearing ship, lest she might alter her course and bear away, endued me with a courage and determination of which my ignoble enemy was altogether destitute. He could steal upon me when asleep, but I could perceive that he now shrank from the expression of honest defiance and resolution that flashed in my eyes and glowed in my face.

We grasped each other !

Not a word was spoken, and no sound was heard, but our suppressed breathing.

We were near the verge of the chasm, and more than ever was the struggle now for life or death ! By sudden jerks ; by bending backward and thrusting forward, he strove to place me between it and himself, with the intention of tossing me into its black and terrible depth ; but I grasped him with a death-clutch, resolving that if it came to such an issue, we should perish together.

The struggle was frightful ; but it was too much for me, as his strength overmatched mine.

I felt the failing of my powers, and my heart grew sick, though the imminence of my danger caused me to make efforts against him, which I now consider superhuman.

He rapidly forced me backward ; and now he began to shout and laugh, for only three yards of thick and furzelike herbage lay between us and eternity. He was gathering all his vast strength for one decided effort, when a decayed gourd was crushed to pulp under his right foot—he slipped, and fell forward with violence towards the chasm, while I rolled in the *other* direction ; and before I arose, he had uttered a wild shriek, and vanished !

For a moment, I could scarcely realize the truth ; but found that he had fallen *through* the luxuriant fringe of creeping plants, wild vines, and yellow gourds which hung over the brow of the chasm ; but having caught a tough

vine tendril or branch in his descent, he swung by it over the black profundity, clinging with seamanlike tenacity by both hands, and uttering the most piteous cries for mercy, or for that succour which I was totally unable to render, even had I been disposed to do so.

Cautiously I drew near and surveyed him.

The chasm was about twenty feet wide. Its walls descended sheer into profound obscurity below, for a hundred feet and more—perhaps, for aught man can learn, into the bowels of the earth.

About five feet from the side on which I stood, the wretched Knuckleduster swung by the vine-branch, which he clutched as tenaciously as before he had clutched *me*, with his felon hands. His face was alternately pale as death, or flushed with crimson, as the blood rushed backward from heart to head.

My face and mouth were covered with blood ; my limbs ached with bruises ; my throat had been compressed in that ruffianly struggle to the verge of suffocation : thus my heart boiled with rage ; I was pitiless as a tiger, and heard his entreaties—his offers to be my slave for life, with loathing and with laughter ; but they ended in a howl of mingled fury and despair, when I drew from my breast-pocket *his* large clasped knife, and opened it with grim deliberation.

“Abandoned wretch, the odds are now in my favour,” said I ; “you are helpless—I have no power to save you, even if I would ; but I may hasten the fast-running sands of your evil life. The time has come when you must taste of that bitterness you have so freely dealt out to others—the bitterness of death ! So, villain, receive the fate you were about to accord to me !”

At these words I slashed the sharp knife across the tough tendril of the gourd-vine. It parted, and Knuckleduster at once vanished into the awful profundity below, and with the

scream of a despairing spirit. To what depth he fell, I know not, for no sound followed his disappearance.

My hair seemed to bristle up, and heavily the hot bead-drops rolled over my brow !

I thanked Heaven for my narrow escape—for the retribution thus placed in my hands, and turned away with little more regret than if I had dealt a finishing blow to an expiring reptile. I had already fought my way over too many slain heaps of good and gallant hearts, for the impression made upon me by the fate of this man—or the mode in which I had hastened it—to be very lasting or very profound.

Hurrying to the summit of the cliff on which he had assaulted me, breathless lest I should be too late to signal the ship whose appearance had caused this conflict and unforeseen catastrophe, I looked around for her in an agony of suspense.



CHAPTER LVIII.

SAVED !

A LARGE double-banked frigate was now shortening sail about a mile from the coast, and a boat left her side as the mainyards were backed, and the courses hauled up. Thus, I believed she was merely shortening sail, to permit a party of explorers to visit the island, and this surmise proved in the sequel to be a correct one.

On looking again, as she swung round, and the sunshine fell full upon her shivering maintopsail, I recognized a patch made in the sail where a ball from Fort Royal had pierced it, and by this mark knew her to be my old friend and habitation, the *Adder*.

The boat was soon midway between her and the beach ; the bright blades of its sixteen oars were flashing like silver in the sunlight, as it sped along the rippling waves.

Such was the double emotion caused by the effect of my recent fierce excitement, and joy at the prospect of release from my miserable seclusion, that my limbs trembled with feebleness, and my eyes were so full of tears, that I could scarcely descend the cliffs to meet the crew, and was without voice to hail them, as they ran their boat into a little creek, laying in the oars in true man-o'-war fashion ; and then a number of young officers, bent on a "lark" or ramble about the island, sprang ashore with boisterous glee and laughter, and all armed with ship-muskets or fowling-pieces.

At last I gathered strength to utter a shout that seemed to come from my inner heart, while descending a wooded bank to the beach, where the recently-landed group stood gazing at me with astonishment expressed in all their faces.

Though the tattered remains of my uniform, my uncombed hair and shaggy beard, were somewhat fantastic, my aspect was too wild, haggard, wasted, and forlorn, to excite laughter, while hurrying toward them.

"Now, in the name of old Davy, who, or what are you?" asked one, whom I knew to be the first-lieutenant of the *Adder*.

"One who has the pleasure of knowing you well enough, Mr. Percival," said I, stretching out my hands to him.

"This is a deuced queer rencontre ! are you sailor or soldier, Carib or what?"

"Come, come, Percival ; surely I am not so altered as to be taken for a Carib, though I have lived like one for many a day. Thanks be to Providence, you have come to my rescue ! Cannot you remember me—Ellis of the Scots Fusiliers—Lieutenant Ellis, who sailed from Guadaloupe

and Los Santos in the prize privateer *Etna* on a special duty ? ”

“ With Ned Stanley—remember you, my dear fellow, of course ! ” said he, grasping his hand, as his companions, now assured that I was neither a satyr, an Orson, a Casper Hauser, or likely to *eat them*, came round me ; and the joy I felt on hearing their voices, and seeing their open, honest, and weatherbeaten English faces, was so great in my swelling heart, that it almost amounted to pain.

“ How came this about—that we find you here and alone ? ” asked Percival.

“ We encountered a hurricane——”

“ Ah—where about ? ”

“ Off the isle of Avis, or the tail of the Avis Bank—the ship foundered—capsized and went down.”

“ With all hands on board ? ”

“ All, French passengers and every one.”

“ Never mind the French,” said one, “ but poor Ned Stanley——”

“ He was swept off the maintopsail-yard, when the mast was lying horizontally in the water, and so was drowned with four others who clung to it.”

“ And you——” they inquired with one voice.

“ After long drifting in the sea, and being driven hither and thither by waves and wind, I was washed ashore with a spare mizentopsail-yard, and have lived here like Robinson Crusoe ever since.”

“ A strange story ! ” said one.

“ It is deuced fortunate for you,” said Mr. Percival, “ that during the last day or two, the gale was so stiff that we were driven thus far out of our intended course. Having sighted this island by our glasses, a few of us came off to have a lark with the Carib girls, if there were any, and a shot at the monkeys, or anything else that might turn up.”

"Were you cruising?"

"Yes, in search of any French craft we might find; but there is not a tricolour pennant to be seen in these waters, so to-night we haul up for Guadaloupe again."

"What are the news from that quarter?"

"Bad enough," replied several shaking their heads.

"How—the yellow fever, I suppose, has broken out among the troops?"

"We have not wanted for that either," replied Percival, "but the French have retaken *La Fleur d'Epée*, and played the devil with your 43rd Regiment; however, you shall hear all about this after. Meantime, a meal such as befits a Christian, and a glass of good wine, will not be unacceptable I presume, so come off to the frigate at once. Gentlemen," he continued, addressing his party, "you can remain ashore, while I take Mr. Ellis off to the ship—but remember to assemble here the moment she fires a gun or displays her ensign."

He kindly assisted me into the boat, and now my emotion was such, that I almost sank down in the stern-sheets.

"In fenders—out oars," said he, assuming the tiller-rope; "and now give way, lads—give way with a will!"

But the injunction was scarcely required. In their anxiety to place me on board, the brave fellows bent to their oars with such vigour, that by every stroke the long, sharp boat was actually lifted clean out of the water, and we surged through it with the speed of a race-horse. Then, when again I found myself alongside the noble old frigate, and saw her triced-up ports, with their tier of artillery peering through them—her swelling "wooden wall," that towered like a bastion from the water—her well-squared yards and tapered masts, that towered away to the long whiplike pennant that streamed on the wind—I say, when seeing all this, and hearing the sounds of English voices, of

a fiddle and scraps of a song or two from the idlers between decks—then, more than all, the soldierly aspect of the smart marine sentinel on the poop in his red coat and well pipe-clayed belts—I felt myself at *home* indeed, but with the fear that all might prove another dream.

On computing dates, we found that I had been exactly *one month and eighteen days* on the island.

Once away from it, my past existence there seemed really like a dream, which I could scarcely recall.



CHAPTER LIX.

CAPTAIN CRANKY.

I WAS received with considerable kindness by Captain Cranky, who, with all his roughness and tyranny, was not without some redeeming points of character. He conveyed me at once to his cabin, furnished me with proper refreshments, clothing, and with that which was of some importance in the days when George III. was king, shaving apparatus, for of all these items I was greatly in need.

After living so long in the open air, I had a sensation of oppression and suffocation in his cabin, and the combined odours of the ship were also overpowering. Afterwards, when at lunch, the captain and Mr. Percival, heard the relation of my adventures on the island, and detailed for the information of Admiral Jervis my account of the loss of the *Etna*.

I was then informed of the events which had taken place at Guadaloupe in my absence.

The brave old General Dundas—that sturdy specimen of a Scottish gentleman and soldier of the old school—had died there of yellow fever, and my regiment, the Fusiliers, had suffered considerably by that scourge of the Antilles.

The general was scarcely interred, when a French expedition consisting of several sail of the line, with frigates armed *en flute*, and transports with two thousand troops on board, had suddenly arrived and assailed fort La Fleur d'Épée. Landing in thirteen boats, they stormed the works, after a hard struggle driving out our 43rd light infantry, under Colonel Drummond, who, finding his strength reduced to only *one hundred and fifty* rank and file, abandoned the place, and embarking them in two large boats, set sail for Basse Terre, leaving the foe in possession of one half of the island, which is divided in two by a narrow channel. The French in following them up, had nearly captured the Earl of Kildonan and his young countess, who had arrived from Britain, and both of whom had been on a visit to Colonel Drummond, when La Fleur d'Épée was so unexpectedly attacked and retaken. In crossing the Riviere Salee the two boats were exposed to a fire of grape from the French galloper guns, and the countess had her dress torn by the balls, and her face covered by the blood of a corporal who was killed by her side.

All this had occurred on the 5th of June, and Sir Charles Grey was now taking measures to drive these temporary victors into the sea.

“We shall haul up for Guadaloupe to night,” said Captain Cranky, “and rejoin old Jack Jervis—for we know there were at least nine large ships in the squadron which retook the fort, and I would not, for a thousand guineas, miss the

chance of overhauling the parleyvoos, d—n them ! Take some more wine, my good fellow, or would you prefer grog ? D—n my eyes ! to think of living on greens and cold water for nearly two months. I consider our ship-biscuits bad enough, when full of these maggots and weevils that whirlwind Tom—'tis a name we have for the devil aboard ship—is always putting into them ; but sink me ! even a week on that island—a week of banyan days, would have been the death of old Tom Cranky.”

While the captain ran on thus, and forced me to drink glass after glass of wine, I could scarcely repress a smile, on remembering the terror I had of him when on board the Leith pressing-tender.

As soon as the party came off from the island, which they did with their boat laden with yams, tortoises, and fruit, we set sail for Guadaloupe, and, to my surprise, my oldest friend could not have exceeded Captain Cranky, in his continued kindness and attention to me.

After the squadron left the West Indies, he served with great distinction in the Mediterranean, and afterwards in the Baltic. When in the latter sea, with the combined fleets of Britain and Russia, then under the command of Admiral Viscount Duncan, a curious anecdote was related of him, which was well known in those days.

The *Adder*, requiring to be refitted, was put into the harbour of Memel, where the Emperor of Russia, the hapless Paul I. (who was strangled in 1801) was then residing with the King of Prussia, Frederick William II., as they were in alliance with us against France.

It happened that the two monarchs, attended by a few gentlemen, were walking along the mole to survey the new fortifications, when they met Captain Thomas Cranky ; and his peculiar aspect, his battered visage, and old cocked hat, his periwig, pea-jacket, and brass-hilted hanger, attracted

their attention. Then Paul I., perceiving a Russian military order dangling at his lapelle beside a boatswain's whistle, which Cranky was never without, inquired politely when he got it.

"Last year, for my services at the blockade of Ancona," replied Cranky briefly, and was moving on, as he hated all foreigners with a hearty old English hatred, viewing them as a Skye terrier does rats.

"Oh, you served with the allied Russian, Turkish, and British squadrons?" continued the emperor.

"Belay, you lubber, and overhaul your speech again; don't name the British fleet *last*," said Cranky, totally ignorant of whom he was addressing; but the Emperor Paul laughed heartily.

"Take care, sir," said Frederick William, smiling; "you are addressing His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias."

Confounded on hearing this, Cranky drew back, blushed very red, and taking off his rusty cocked hat, made a profound sea bow

"And *this* gentleman," added the emperor, who was very much amused, "is his Prussian Majesty, Frederick William II."

On hearing this, Cranky conceived that they were bantering him; so he stuck his cocked hat fiercely over his solitary eye, and sputtered out,—

"'Vast, you lubbers! I dont choose to be made game of by you, or such as you,—so sheer off, or I'll trounce you both, for insulting the captain of a British frigate!"

And so he swaggered off, with his left hand upon the brass hilt of his old hanger.

Poor Tom Cranky has long since been at rest from his labours by sea and land; but he lived long about Greenwich, where he was a great authority upon all matters

pertaining to ships and salt water,—the lion of a little naval club, and was wont to boast,—

That enjoying
Half-pay for life made mankind worth destroying.



CHAPTER LX.

THE YELLOW FEVER.

THE heat of the atmosphere was now so great, that one might have imagined, as Cranky said, “that there was only a sheet of paper between the *Adder's* cabin and *another* place.”

As the months of May, June, July, and August, are the most fatal for the yellow fever, it now broke out on board ; the sick-bay was soon full ; many officers were confined to their cabins, and a day seldom passed without some one being sent to his long home at the bottom of the great deep, with a thirty-two pound shot at his heels ; and ere long I bade fair to become one of its victims.

The excitement so long and so recently undergone,—the sudden change of food, raiment, and quarters, after the total alteration of my system and habits, during the time that I had lived like Nebuchadnezzar on the Isle of Tortoises.—now began to tell fearfully upon me ; and I was assailed by that scourge of the Antilles, the yellow fever. When the conviction of this came over me, I had but one emotion,—devout thankfulness that it had *not* fallen upon me while lonely and desolate, helpless and friendless, on the island.

On the third day after we bore up for Guadaloupe, I was seated at mess in the ward-room of the frigate, enjoying the tempered atmosphere of the evening as it passed the open ports, through which we could see the waves of the blue sea as the *Adder* sped on, with the wind upon her quarter, when first the symptoms of the dread pest assailed me ; and from all I knew of it, I made up my mind to prepare for the worst.

A wine-glass dropped from my hand and shivered on the deck, as the general premonition, a cold and violent fit of shivering, came suddenly over me. Then I remember Percival, the first lieutenant, starting up, and exclaiming,—

“ The fever, by Jove ! Sentry, pass the word for the doctor—quick, the yellow admiral is here ! ”

In ten minutes after I was undressed and in bed, ill with the confirmed pestilence. How long and weary were its hours of agony, thirst, and lassitude, which followed that fatal evening !

After the shivering fit, there usually succeeds a violent fever, with acute pains in the head, back, and limbs ; an intense dejection of mind ; an agonizing thirst, with a tongue so dry, that it rattles in one’s jaws like a kernel in a shell ; and then comes the frightful *yellowness* of complexion, from which the fever takes its name.

Though I have seen some who, after it abated, became cold as ice, and remained thus, with a tolerably sedate mind, and expired after twelve hours or so,—others who died after violent bleeding from the nose,—others who departed raving mad,—in me it took the form of continued delirium, in which, as I was afterwards told, I raved of the lonely island, renewed my struggle with Knuckleduster, and nearly killed a poor marine, who acted as my servant ; then I laboured to raise the wreck of a treasure-ship, and believed myself again and again to be in a great cavern, till total prostra-

tion of mind and body succeeded, and a long stupor came over me.

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A sea-going frigate of the year 1794 was somewhat different in many respects from a ship of similar rank in the present age of rifled cannon and screw-propellers ; and hence the odours that came from the ship's stores, the bilge, the sick-bay, and the cockpit, when a fierce West-Indian sun was blazing overhead, making the pitch boil between the planks of the main deck, were anything but consolatory or refreshing to the unfortunates on whom the grim pestilence had laid his yellow and shrivelled hand.

When awaking, as it were, from a long lethargy, I found myself slung in a hammock near an open port, through which the blessed breeze of Heaven, as it came over the dancing waves, blew upon my wan and fevered cheek, and refreshed me.

A marine, who had charge of me, now placed a pewter flagon, filled with water-gruel, in my trembling hand. I drank thirstily, and then sank back with a sigh of mingled weakness and satisfaction. Youth made the elements of life strong within me ; and *hope* returned with consciousness, though twice or thrice daily I saw a dark object fall heavily and endlong past the open port—plash into the sunlit sea and disappear !

Then would I close my eyes, and strive to pray, and to remember some of the little lessons my mother taught in purer and happier times ; for these dark objects were the bodies of my fellow-sufferers, who were thus consigned to the waters from the deck above.

Ere long I was able to ask the marine whereabouts we were, and he said,—

“ The isle of Nevis bears about ten miles distant on our

lee bow,—the top of the hill (for the island is only a great conical hill) is in sight.”

“ Then how far are we from Guadaloupe ? ”

“ Ten miles from Nevis, sir, will make us one hundred and forty from Guadaloupe,” replied my accurate informant.

As health returned, I longed for the shore, and for active life. The dull routine of days and nights of sickness anywhere, soon palls upon the excited senses ; but nowhere so soon as in the narrow limits of a little cabin. The sea is certainly an everchanging and beautiful object ; but when the port-lid was closed, my eyes had nothing to rest on but a 24-pound carronade slued alongside, and then it seemed as if every avenue to nature was closed too.

I had nothing near or around me to give pleasure or suggest pleasing thoughts ; and then it is in such a mental and bodily prison, that “ the small still voice ” comes home to the heart and soul, and we seem to think, reflect, and feel, all the more deeply and earnestly, because soul and heart are both thrust back upon themselves.

The breeze which had hitherto been fair, now freshened and blew right ahead ; so we had to beat to windward against it, and four days after, when becoming convalescent, I heard the booming of the *Adder's* guns, as she saluted the flag of Admiral Sir John Jervis, when, under a press of canvas, we ran into the roadstead of Basse Terre, in the island of Guadaloupe.

CHAPTER LXI.

I REJOIN THE REGIMENT.

I NOW experienced somewhat of that miraculous cure which restored Bruce of ours to health, before we landed in Martinique. Excitement and pleasure at the prospect of soon rejoining the regiment and seeing my old friends, endued me with new strength ; and in spite of all that Captain Cranky, Percival, or their surgeon could urge, I insisted on going on shore next day, and on shore I accordingly went.

War and pestilence had made such havoc in my dear old corps, that, on the 1st of July, only two days after my landing, I found myself parading as captain of the third company, *vice* Gordon of Ardgilion, who had been shot in the first attempt to retake La Fleur d'Épée.

I was not yet twenty years of age !

Once again in Guadaloupe, the entire half of which was possessed by the enemy, I had every prospect of seeing a good deal of fighting ; and the fire of ambition to which my rapid success bent every impetus, glowed anew within me ; though somewhat tempered by the horrors of the yellow fever, which thinned our ranks so fast that the bear-skin caps of the poor Fusiliers lay thicker in the barrack-yard and in the ditches of Basse Terre, than I had ever seen them in action ; till at last an order was issued to burn all the gear of the dead.

I was not permitted to remain long idle, for while Sir George Grey, the commander-in-chief, was preparing to recapture Grande Terre, as one half of the isle is named, I was detached with my company on a special service

against a body of armed slaves who were in revolt ; and while acting by turns as *Gens du Roi*, as French republican citizens, and as men of colour struggling to erect a free community, committed outrages too horrible for narration upon the French planters, the white troops of Victor Hugues, and all British soldiers who unfortunately fell into their hands.

The regiment was on its morning parade in the ancient citadel of Basse Terre, when the Earl of Kildonan rode to the group of officers, who were gossiping and bantering each other, in the usual way, before the bugle sounds "Fall in," and announced the duty which was before me.

"These rascals," said he, "are in arms in the mountains, and are such a common nuisance to all, that Sir Charles Grey has already conceived the idea of inviting the co-operation of our enemies the French, for the extermination of all revolted blacks."

"Who leads them?" I inquired.

"Scipio, a leader of the revolted blacks in Hispaniola—the same African savage who destroyed the family of Monsieur du Plessis and abducted his daughter. After suffering, within a short but bloody month, many reverses from the arms of the French colonists, he fled by sea, and reaching Guadaloupe, has incited the slaves of a wealthy planter, named Monsieur George de Thoisy, some eight hundred in number, to revolt, and carry off their master, whom they intend to put to a barbarous death ; at least, so I am informed by Lady Kildonan, who is residing with his family. Since then many mulattoes and quadroons have joined him ; thus his band musters nearly a thousand strong."

"My lord, my company is barely a hundred rank and file !" said I hesitatingly.

"But they are Scots Fusiliers, and those you are to attack

are only a band of wretched negroes. As a sample how they mean to carry on the war, the standard of our sable hero with the classic name, is a white man's head upon a pike."

"This is encouraging!" said I, laughing.

"I am glad you think so."

"And my orders are——"

"To march at once, attack their fastness in the mountains, and save M. de Thoisy if you can. Root these fellows out, and show no quarter, but take especial care that none of your men fall into their hands, *alive* at least, if you can prevent it."

"Are they worse than other folks?" asked Rowland Haystone.

"I should think so—they eat their prisoners."

"Eat them!"

"Yes; after offering them up to an idol they have fashioned out of the bones of white men."

"Well, Ellis, this is not a pleasant prospect for you after being starved on that island for a month and more," said Glendonwyn.

"And this rich old planter——"

"They can't be particular to a shade, if they eat *him*," said Haystone, laughing.

"Why?" I inquired.

"I don't think the old fellow will prove very digestible."

"You remember his daughters, Georgette, Claire, and Julie, three handsome girls, whom we met at the ball here in Basse Terre, on the night before La Fleur d'Epée was retaken," said Bruce.

"Yes," replied Haystone, twirling his whiskers (we were not permitted a moustache in those days); "charming French creole demoiselles, with designs upon the liberty of mankind equal to those of Bonaparte and all the Directory."

"They beat all the girls in the Antilles, windward and leeward," said another, "and can flirt like the deuce."

"Ah—we understand all that," lisped our last accession of a sub from the dépôt ; "but though we do make a little love in the Fusiliers, we don't marry !"

"Do not jest thus, if you please, gentlemen," said Lord Kildonan ; "their father, poor man, must be saved, if possible. He is, I believe, a loyal old French royalist, and is now at the mercy of absolute devils incarnate. So to you, Ellis, I confide the duty of saving him. March, and take your whole company ; but whatever you do, do warily, for those black fellows are full of strategy and wickedness. See that your men keep sober, for kill-devil (new rum) slays more than French bullets or the yellow fever. Shoot all who make the slightest resistance, or in fact, whom you find in arms."

"And philanthropists at home ?" queried Glendonwyn.

"Philanthropists at home, who run no danger, and sleep sound in their beds at night, may say exactly what they please. With savages, one must act the savage. Are we to grant the courtesies of war and of civilization to those who are ignorant alike of military honour and the amenities of civilized life ? *Terror* is the only argument they understand ; so, through terror, bloodshed, and death, must we speak to them. To strike terror into mere cannibals is to befriend them. There sounds the bugle ! Gentlemen, to your companies. Ellis, good-bye ; make quick work with Scipio and his Quacos, or you may be too late to share in the recapture of La Fleur d'Epée."

In ten minutes after this, under the guidance of a faithful French quadroon, I was on the march at the head of my company, and had quitted the town of Basse Terre by the shady sun-proof avenue.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE DOS D'ANE.

As our time of morning parade in that season, was about the hour of sunrise, our march towards the mountains was a very pleasant one.

The old castle or citadel of Basse Terre, which the valiant Benbow besieged in vain, in 1702, still jutted, with its four great bulwarks, in grim strength into the water. Its walls were mounted by sixty pieces of French ordnance, but now the British flag waved above them; and as we marched on, we heard our band playing in the square,

Between St. Johnstone's and Bonnie Dundee,
I'll gar ye be fain to follow wi' me,

the old quickstep of the regiment.

A portion of this citadel was not more than thirty-five years old, for when the British forces were there in 1759, it was blown up by accident, and with it perished the Governor, Lieutenant-colonel Desbrissay of Watson's Foot, the 38th or old Staffordshire regiment. He was carried into the air, together with Major Trollop, and both being found crushed to death, were buried in the Carmelite church, where I saw their tombs.

Concerning the colonel, I remember Captain Glendonwyn relating an anecdote, as we stood by his monument one day.

"Desbrissay," said he, "was a captain of infantry at the battle of Rocaux, which was fought against Marshal Saxe, near Liege, on the 12th of October, 1746, when Sir John Ligonier, after doing all that a brave general could, posted

some British battalions in hollow squares in rear of the *dorpts* to secure the retreat of the army, which was pressed by the splendid cavalry of Saxe, and which the Butcher of Culloden was blundering by his cowardice and inability. There Desbrissay fell wounded, and while lying on the ground was run through the body by a French officer, whose dastardly example was immediately followed by some Walloon infantry, thirteen of whom planted their bayonets in his body. Yet Desbrissay did not die; he was taken prisoner by the French, and by the skilful treatment of their surgeons he recovered, for there are some men who possess as many lives as a cat.

“One day, not long after his convalescence, being at dinner with Marshal Count de Saxe, who was deemed the mirror of military honor, and was ever kind and gentle to prisoners, the count said,—

“‘Pray tell me, sir, if you know the officer who used you so barbarously on the field of Rocaux?’

“‘I do, M. le Maréchal.’

“‘You do?’

“‘Yes—as well as I know you, M. le Comte.’

“‘Pray give me his name, that I may make him an example to all France, by tearing the epaulettes from his shoulders, and disgracing him in front of his regiment,’

“‘Excuse me, M. le Comte,’ replied the brave but gentle Desbrissay, ‘I know his corps—I know his name, and I know his rank in the French service, but I beg to decline pointing him out to you, contenting myself with the hope, that one day I may meet him hand to hand on the field of honour, and then, like a true English gentleman, shall I avenge the savage wrong he and his soldiers did me on that fatal day at Rocaux.’

“‘Monsieur, you are most generous—I shall press you no further,’ said Count Saxe.

"So spoke the gallant Desbrissay, of the old 38th ; but the day he longed for never came ; he was sent to serve in other lands, and thirteen years after that shameful defeat near Liege, he perished in Guadaloupe, and lies there interred in the church of the Carmelites."

And now, with this anecdote, we have brought the reader to the rising ground which looks down on the town of Basse Terre, the capital of the Isle of *Alto*, Guadaloupe, as it was named by the Spaniards, because its *high* mountains resembled those of the same name, which rise in all their solemn beauty between the Tagus and the Guadiana in the Estramadura of old Spain.

Many of those hills, towards which we marched, were covered by waving woods, that drew down the clouds, and added to the charms of the scenery ; but when the morning sun arose, the shadows fell deep on every rugged pass and wide and fair savannah.

And now if the reader will look back with me, from our line of march, he may see the city of Basse Terre, with its churches of the Carmelites and Jesuits, and its white-washed houses, clustering round the little bay ; on the south, its old mishapen and irregular castle, perched on a rock so lofty, that when viewed from it, our ships of the line seemed no larger than bumboats ; on the north, the heavy bastions of Le Morne Rouge ; to the eastward, wide fields of sugar, cotton, and indigo, studded with groves, mills, and houses ; to the westward the Caribbean sea, with its blue waves running merrily on sands of silvery whiteness.

Above this border of sand, there rose green belts of sugar-cane, and over these were the hills towards which we were marching, shrouded in the dark foliage of old primeval forests ; and higher still, the rarefied clouds that floated like gossamer webs about their peaks.

After a halt during mid-day in the thickets, we pushed

on by a circuitous route towards a cleft or gorge in the mountains named the Dos d'Ane, which guarded the passage into Cabesterre, the more level and fertile part of the isle, and there the outpost of Scipio's black band was last seen, as our quadroon guide assured me. The French are said to have given the hill its name from a fancied resemblance to the form of an ass. The ascent was steep and rugged, as the narrow path over which we toiled in heavy marching order, with arms loaded and bayonets fixed—for we knew not the moment we might be attacked—was encumbered by masses of fallen rock ; by deep rents and rifts in the cliffs of limestone and basalt, and through these runnels of warm and sulphureous water were trickling under the broad and fibrous leaves of the giant tropical weeds. Thick vapours rose here and there from stagnant pools which were shrouded by dwarf mangroves ; but beyond this gorge which was so gloomy, that one might fancy it led to the putrid lake of Avernus, rose mountain slopes covered by velvet-green, and trees of every kind.

A profound and melancholy silence reigned here ; at least, we heard only the croak of the huge frogs that squatted in the marshy pools, or the voice of the mocking-bird in a grove of fern-palms ; and now as evening began to fall, and we penetrated deeper into the gloomy gorge of the Dos d'Ane, our guide warned me that we were within a short distance of the camp of the black insurgents—less than a mile, he thought.

A few hundred yards further on we found a deep and wooded ravine opening to the right of the narrow path. Therein I concealed the whole company, and so soon as the dusk favoured, went forward to reconnoitre, leaving my men orders to maintain the strictest silence until my return. Guided by the quadroon, I advanced through the cleft in the mountains, and ere long, by the various strange and tumultuous

sounds which woke their echoes, I found that we were approaching the camp of Scipio.

Lest the guide might play me false—for we had no great faith in men of colour—I had shown him significantly a pair of loaded pistols, that were stuck somewhat ostentatiously in my waist-belt ; but the poor fellow proved every way faithful, and here, for the benefit of the uninitiated, I may mention that a quadroon is the child of a white and a mulatto, who is the child of a pure black and a European ; but there are also black as well as white creoles—the former being the children of slaves, born and reared in degradation and slavery.



CHAPTER LXIII.

THE WORSHIPPERS OF THE DEVIL.

A LURID light that played and wavered on the rocks and tufted trees of the deep pass, indicated to us distinctly the camp of the enemy, who were evidently engaged in some orgy, ceremony, or sacrifice—we knew not which, amid their fancied security, and under the shadow of night.

The quadroon led me up the face of the rock, by a path known apparently only to himself and the monkeys of that locality, it was so steep and dangerous ; but after creeping forward on our hands and knees, I suddenly found myself overlooking a very singular and startling scene.

About fifty yards below me lay the camp of the negroes, on a green plateau, which they had rudely but strongly fortified by palisades of palms and bamboos, pegged or wattled together, and banked up within and without to

form a species of breastwork. In the centre of this arena, a vast fire was blazing, and by its light the whole place and its inhabitants were visible as distinctly as they might have been at noon-day. The circular camp seemed to swarm with woolly heads and black forms, glowing redly in the flames, which, as they were blown to and fro by the passing breeze, imparted to every object a weird and unearthly aspect. Amid this sable crowd, gleamed bayonets, muskets, pikes, sabres, and agricultural implements, which had been sharpened and fashioned into impromptu weapons. When I saw their numbers, the ferocity of their black features, their bloodshot eyes and white teeth, as they jabbered and grinned ; and when I heard their war-songs, their horrible yells and screams, the smallness of the force under my command, and the desperation of the duty on which I had been sent, came painfully and vividly before me.

Moreover I became aware that if the safety of the abducted M. de Thoisy was to be achieved, there was no time to be lost in attacking them, as preparations for a deed of horror were in rapid progress within the camp.

Nearly the whole of these insurgent slaves were from the small kingdom of Angola, in Western Africa, and were Gangas, or worshippers of the devil. For centuries, the white men have only resorted to their shores for the purchase of slaves, and the supply has always been ample.

With wild shouts of "Gangajumba ! Gangajumba !" a circle of hideous old negresses, in a state of perfect nudity, danced hand in hand around an idol of dreadful aspect—the great *Fetish*—which was reared in the centre of the camp. They sang some gibberish, and at intervals burst into those peals of hyena-like laughter which showed all their teeth. Squatted on their hams, close by, were a band of negroes, making a noise which they considered music, with the hoarse rattle of an unbraced drum, shrill fifes, the twangle

of the banjo, and the melodious grunting of goat's-horn trumpets. Ere long, the mass in camp became infected by the ardour of the negresses, and all proceeded to dance and scream and whirl about, while loading the night-air with discordant sounds.

Above them towered their idol, Gangajumba, at whose shrine all this infernal hurlyburly preceded a more terrible sacrifice.

It was of appalling aspect, being formed of tortoise-shells, strung over a figure of basket-work, and streaked with red paint to imitate ribs and bones. It was eight feet in height, by nearly three feet broad. The enormous head was surrounded by a string of white men's skulls, scraped clean and white ; but the deep cuts and incisions in them bore terrible evidence of the deaths by which these victims perished. Tall, feathery palm-leaves waved over its brow ; two pieces of glass composed the eyes, and when a lighted lamp was placed in its head by an old white-haired Congo savage, who acted as ganga or priest, a glare shone through them that was grotesquely terrific.

All this, when viewed by the lurid light of the gigantic fire which cast its gleams on the impending rocks of the deep pass, and on the drooping palms that waved slowly in the night-wind, formed such a scene as I had never beheld. In the background, La Souffriere, or the Brimstone Mountain, which rose to a stupendous height, added to the shadowy horror of the landscape, by emitting from its various craters, sudden jets of light and volumes of black smoke, starred with myriad sparks of fire.

The sable outlaws who were revolving with such frantic energy beneath us, were clad in all kinds of finery, stolen from the plantations they had destroyed ; and these were worn in the most absurd manner. Thus, I observed one gigantic fellow who had a white straw hat adorned by nearly

a dozen of regimental feathers plaited ingeniously around it. A pair of gold epaulettes hung at his bare, brawny neck, by a string of gilt buttons, and lower down were several crosses of St. Louis, torn, doubtless, from the breasts of dead Frenchmen, worn among ladies' jewels and a necklace of parrot's feathers.

"That man is the chief," whispered my copper-coloured guide, with a voice reduced to a whisper by alarm.

"Scipio,—who destroyed Mademoiselle du Plessis?"

"Yes; and that is his tent with the standard in front of it."

"I cannot see a standard," said I, surveying the cluster of wigwams, which were grouped like bee-hives in a corner of the camp; "but I see a man's head upon a pole or pike."

"A white man's head?"

"Yes."

"Ah,—it belonged to M. le Procureur du Roi, at Basse Terre; they caught him when riding near the town one evening, and his head was off almost before he missed it. Well, that is the standard of Scipio, who is now stringing his banjo 'for a song.'"

"I shall teach this modern Scipio Africanus a sharp lesson to-night. But I do not see M. de Thoisy."

"He is in that tent with the *fetishes* around it," replied my guide, pointing to a booth which was formed of bamboos and yellow grass matting, and on the sides of which there hung nearly a hundred lesser fetishes, as those guardians of the household or person are named by the negroes of Congo and Angola, and which are composed of hoofs, hair, bones of animals, beaks, skulls and claws of birds, fish-bones, parrots' feathers, or old nails, for nothing is too mean to form the *Lares* of the degraded Angolians.

"So he is there?"

"Yes—bound hand and foot. Why they saved him, and

slew M. le Procureur whom he was accompanying for an evening ride, I cannot divine."

"When will they sacrifice him?"

"When the moon rises above the peak of La Souffrière."

"So soon? then, by Jove, we have no time to lose!"

"He is to endure the most dreadful tortures."

"How?"

"By iron hooks, inserted under his shoulder-blades, he will be suspended alive over a slow fire, and his lower joints will be cut off one by one, with the sharp knives of the gangas, beginning with the toes, and so proceeding upward to the knees and hip-joints; but few live, with the fire playing about them, until the knives come *that* length."

"When will the moon be over La Souffrière?" said L, starting up at the risk of discovery.

"In another hour," replied the young quadroon, consulting his watch.

"Then we have just time to bring up my men, and make a dash at the palisades," I replied in a loud whisper, as we crawled backward, until we reached the narrow path which led us down the rocks, and from thence I hastened back to the ravine in which we had concealed my company.

CHAPTER LXIV.

SCIPIO.

"Our orders are, that we take no prisoners, but strike terror by the fury of our attack and the severity of our treatment," said I, as the company re-entered the pass ; for human life had now become such a cheap commodity, that if we set little value on our own existence, we put none whatever on that of others—of the insurgent negroes, especially.

Dividing the company in two, as we drew near the camp, I heard once more the wild clamour of its occupants, and saw the wavering gleams of their watchfire falling on rock and tree. With one subdivision of forty men I marched to assail the palisade in front, while my lieutenant—an officer who afterwards commanded a battalion of the 60th under the Duke of Wellington, with the remainder, led by the quadroon guide, made a *détour* to the left, and ascended by the secret path already mentioned.

On him, and this flank movement, I principally placed my hopes of success ; from the point he could attain, he was to throw a shower of hand-grenades into the camp, and then, under cover of a volley, rush down among its dingy occupants with the charged bayonet, while I attacked them from the pathway at the same moment.

The grenades, which have now unaccountably sunk into disuse, were then much used by our regiment, and by all grenadier companies. They are hollow balls or shells, two inches and a half in diameter, which, after being charged with fine powder, are set on fire by means of a slender fuse driven into the touch-hole.

On exploding, it carries mutilation and death to all in its vicinity.

I turned to the peak of La Souffrière; the time was critical. The rising moon filled all the clear sky beyond the sulphur mountain with a liquid light, amid which the brightest stars were lost. In ten minutes she would be above its peak, from which a stupendous column of black smoke was now ascending for miles into the pure blue sky.

Softly we drew near the negro fortress, and I could see among the dense mangroves and shrubbery the occasional glitter of arms, as our left subdivision ascended the height, while we toiled straight forward, over rocks and stones, and matters less pleasant—such as the mutilated and charred remains of the white population who had fallen victims to the worshippers of the Fetish, and whose cloven caputs were strung around his monstrous visage. Snakes hissed among the long grass, frogs squattered, and gorged rats and land-crabs scampered away by dozens on all sides, as we approached the palisades.

Suddenly a shrill yell, and the explosion of a musket, the ball of which whistled past me, informed us that the black sentinel who watched the road that led through the Dos d'Ane had perceived us, just as I formed the subdivision in line, rank entire, or what is often termed in Indian file, to show a greater front.

"Forward men," I exclaimed; "down with the palisades, and at them with the bayonet!"

With a cheer we rushed on; six men with sharp hatchets assailed the bamboo palisade, which fell like reeds before their sturdy blows; and just as Scipio and his sooty ragamuffins hurried to defend the gap, a loud hurrah on our left, and the explosion of forty hand-grenades that fell whizzing through the darkness, each bursting among them with a loud report and a ruddy glare, paralyzed the savages,

and in a moment struck them with a panic, which a combined cross-fire, and an attack in front and flank with the charged bayonet, completed. They threw down their arms and fled by a passage on the other side of their *pah*, or camp, abandoning to us all their wigwams, their accumulated plunder, the idol, their fetishes, and what was of much more importance to me, their miserable prisoner, old Monsieur George de Thoisy, whom we found tied by manilla ropes, and lying almost senseless with fear, in expectation of a barbarous death. Scipio was overtaken by Sergeant Drum-birrel, who, as he stumbled down the rocks, ran three feet of his pike through his body and killed him on the spot.

By the explosion of the grenades and by the cross-fire we had poured into the place, nearly four hundred blacks were killed or wounded within it. Many of the latter were bayoneted by our men, whose legs and feet they bit and tore with their teeth and nails, like wild animals.

"Take care of the women," I exclaimed, as our fire fell among them.

"Where the men are so bad, captain, the squaws cannot be very good," replied a soldier ; "but we must not shoot them I suppose, at all events."

Among other things, we found a supper which some of the Congo fair ones had been cooking in a vast copper brought from a sugar-mill. It was highly seasoned in honour of the contemplated demise of M. de Thoisy ; and its odour was so savoury, that many of my fellows were tempted to partake of the contents, which consisted of ducks, geese, chickens, &c. ; but on Tom Telfer and others, who mistrusted the culinary tastes of the ladies of Congo, poking deeper with their bayonets, they fished up, to their own great merriment and the disgust of the others, two fat monkeys, a pointer bitch and her litter of puppies, all redolent, however, of pepper, nutmeg, and pimento.

We followed the fugitive negroes for nearly a mile beyond the pass, shooting them down like crows, till we got tired of the work, as the poor devils were too terrified to fire a shot in return, or had thrown away their muskets ; so, by sound of bugle I recalled my men—only eight of whom had fallen in storming the stockade—for now columns of smoke and sheets of red flame, rising from the cane-fields on both flanks and in front, showed that the retreating blacks had fired the country on all sides. We heard the crackling of the canes, with the crash of cocoa-trees, while, with the slightest breath of wind, the smoke enveloped us to the verge of suffocation, with a storm of red sparks which made us apprehensive that the ammunition in the pouches might explode.

Beyond the pass opened Cabesterre, and at our feet lay a beautiful savannah (the *Sabana Verde* of the Spaniards) ; it was of great extent, and its greenness, so pale in the light of the moon, which was now high above La Souffrière, was darkened here and there by the sombre foliage of the mahogany-trees under which the listless cattle lay to catch the currents of air. In other places, the yellower tints of the savannah were dotted by solemn scriptural palms, some with drooping branches, and others with foliage that stood up like tufts of ostrich-feathers.

Our grim work was over now !

We buried the dead in a trench ; destroyed their idol, and returned through the pass to head-quarters which we reached on the following night, and there I was thanked for my services and small display of skill and strategy by Sir Charles Grey in general orders.

En route, we left M. de Thoisy (a fine-looking old gentleman who interlarded every remark with eternal references to his late most Christian Majesty) at the avenue of his own mansion, where he never hoped to have been again, and where he overwhelmed me with vows, blessings, thanks, and

invitations. Gratitude for preservation, after all he had undergone, made the poor man ready to worship me, and his heart filled to overflowing.

I remember that on returning from this expedition I lost two of my men, who fell into a hot marsh, and were suffocated before we could extricate them.



CHAPTER LXV.

CAPTURE OF POINT A PETRE.

By the time I returned to head-quarters with my company, Sir George Grey had matured his plans for the recapture of that portion of Guadaloupe which is named Grande Terre. He summoned aid from the neighbouring islands. There first came into the roadstead of Basse Terre, H.M.S. *Veteran*, with two companies of the line from St. Vincent, four from St. Lucia, and two battalions of seamen, under Captain Lewis Robertson, a gallant naval officer, whom Admiral Jervis, in the despatch which records his death, termed "the child of misfortune." Two flank companies of ours (though Fusiliers, we, like the Guards, had them at that time) led by Lieutenants Price and Colepepper, came in the *Winchelsea*, under Viscount Garlies. Our Grenadier company was the tallest, and our light company the smartest I ever beheld.

The encomiums bestowed on me by the general after the affair in the pass of Dos d'Ane, fired me with the desire of achieving something new ; and I had hitherto escaped so well, that I actually began to conceive myself all but bullet-

proof, like some of Tilly's Imperialists of old. In this idea I was doomed, however, to be soon undeceived, and pretty roughly too.

On a fine evening in July, we found ourselves in the brigade of Brigadier Symes, with the first light battalion, under Lieutenant-Colonel Gomm ; the second light battalion under Major Ross, of the 31st ; the Grenadiers under Lieutenant-Colonel Fisher, and one battalion of seamen led by Captain Robertson, of the *Veteran*, all destined to assail the French at Point à Petre. Our landing was effected at Point de l'Ance à Canot, on the southern shore of Grande Terre ; Le Gosier lay about a league on our left ; St. Ann's about two leagues on our right ; a range of mountains—the heights of Caille—were in our front, and beyond them towered La Souffrière, vomiting flames of sulphur into the clear sky, and serving as a volcanic lamp to light us to death or victory.

After disembarking under the guns of two of our frigates, the *Solebay* and *Winchelsea*, we advanced to the heights of Marne Mascot, driving the French outposts before us in flight and disorder ; but, as we are rapidly approaching a very important epoch in my story—indeed, the culminating point of all novels, narratives, and plays—I shall briefly sketch the military operations which led thereto, though unfortunately they failed at that time to reconquer Guadaloupe.

The French troops in Grande Terre were a portion of an expedition which had lately come from Brest, and were under the direction of Victor Hugues and other commissioners who had been sent from Paris to avail themselves of any commotions which might arise in the island ; but their chief hope had been placed in the mulattoes and negros, whose leader Scipio had gone to his last account, as already related, with three feet of Sergeant Drumbirrel's pike in his body. A decree of the French convention had proffered

liberty, equality, and fraternity to every negro who joined the French standard ; thus, M. Victor Hugues, the Republican commander-in-chief, had soon several thousands under his orders, and dreadful enemies we found them, alike in time of truce and battle.

When we marched from the heights of Morne Mascot to attack the troops of Hugues at Point à Petre, orders were strictly enjoined us, not to fire a shot in the assault, as the brigadier wished to storm the town by a night surprise, after out-flanking (if possible) a perilous outpost which lay between us and it.

We heard the frigates' bells in the distance, announcing the hour of eight as we moved off.

The twilight changed rapidly to night, which proved dark and cloudy, no light being visible but that which gleamed at times on the sky from the crater of La Souffrière, as it shot up red and yellow sulphur, with the usual showers of glittering sparks. A march through a well-cultivated valley bordered by groves of pale-yellow lime-trees, rich in verdure of wondrous luxuriance, and studded by the wigwams of negro slaves covered by broad plaintain-leaves, led us towards Point à Petre. By the wayside the snow-white amaryllis grew under the light foliage of the vine, and the golden globes of the orange-trees waved to and fro, like the tufts of the fan-palm, whose leaves bent like ostrich-feathers before the soft trade-wind that came from the distant sea.

In the occasional flashes of the sulphur-mountain I could see the bayonets of the columns gleam at times, while, under the conduct of our quadroon guide we descended into deep ravines, where the plaintain, the cotton, and mahogany trees cast their darkest shadows on our path, and where the scared monkeys chattered as they leaped from branch to branch ; yet we marched on in profound silence, our men being conscious of the stern necessity for reaching the out-

posts of Hugues undiscovered. But all our plans were frustrated by an error of the guide, who contrived matters so ill, that after a long, tedious, and harassing tramp by night over ground of the most difficult nature, about four in the morning the leading section of the advanced guard suddenly heard a voice cry.

“Qui vive?”

“France!” replied Haystone of ours at hap-hazard, and with great presence of mind; but it served no end; a blue port-fire was seen burning steadily behind a palisade for an instant; then there was a vivid flash—a loud whizz, and a dose of canister shot from a 32-pounder gun laid several of our men on the turf to rise no more. This announced that we were close upon the intrenched outpost which the brigadier had resolved to *avoid*, that by out-flanking it, we might reach Point à Petre undiscovered. In his anger, Lord Kildonan nearly pistolled the guide.

“Forward with the bayonet!” was now the cry on all hands, and led by the earl and Major Ross, two companies of Fusiliers rushed at the outwork pell-mell in the dark, ignorant alike where they were going and what they were attacking; but, in three minutes the post was stormed, the cannon spiked, and the picquet or guard driven in, and then we pressed forward double-quick on the town, which lay beyond it.

There the report of the cannon had summoned the foe to arms; and the gleam of torches, with the hiss of rockets, announced that they were in full preparation. From a bastion named Le Morne de Gouvernement, a heavy fire of round shot and grape enfiladed the brigade, as we dashed with a wild hurrah through the streets, driving before us the half-armed and half-clad soldiers and negroes, who were not formed in any order, so sudden was our irruption among them.

A negro aimed at me from a window, and the ball passed through my cap ; but my old comrade, Tom Telfer, shot him dead at the moment he was casting about his firelock to reload. Every man who withstood us for an instant was shot down or bayoneted ; and in an incredibly short space of time we found ourselves victorious, at the end of a street strewn with corpses, black, white, and all shades of copper colour. Dragging a large battery gun, which they had found somewhere, a party of the Naval Brigade, stripped to their waists, came rushing after us with a right royal cheer, though under its heavy iron wheels were crushed many of the unfortunates who lay writhing or dead on the ground ; and by the blaze of some burning houses, we could see them lying in its track, with skulls crushed and intestines protruding ; but one discharge of canister-shot from this piece of cannon completed the discomfiture of the flying foe, and Point à Petre was ours—for a time.

The guns and mortars of Le Morne de Gouvernement were still firing at random, pounding the houses of the town to pieces, and crushing tiles, pillars, roofs, and walls, upon us, ding, dong, and splinter, till our men became thoroughly bewildered ; then, as the devil would have it, in the darkness and confusion they began to fire upon each other ; thus, a volley from the 1st light battalion tore suddenly through the Fusiliers, killing and wounding many, and unhorsing both Lieutenant Rolster, our adjutant, and Doctor Splints. Rendered furious by this, the Scots Fusiliers were about to turn their fire upon their comrades, but were prevented by the exertions of Lord Kildonan and the brigadier, by whose side fell Lieutenant-Colonel Gomm of the 55th, and Captain Robertson of the *Veteran*, mortally wounded.

“I was at this time disabled by a severe wound in my right arm,” says Brigadier Symes, in his despatch ; “and I was much bruised by my horse, which was killed and fell

upon me. Finding it impossible, under these circumstances, to complete the destruction of the enemy's stores, the troops were ordered to leave the town and reform on the heights of Caille, from whence, on approaching, we had driven the enemy, and taken two pieces of cannon."

Amid the dreadful confusion which ensued in the streets, poor old Captain Glendonwyn was killed by a stray shot, with many of our best men ; and three of our lieutenants, Price, Knollis, and Colepepper, lay wounded on the ground ; when our bugles sounded a retreat in the dark, and full of wrath and fury we drew off towards the heights of Caille.

While getting the survivors of my company disentangled, as it were, and formed in some order, a half-spent musket-shot broke my sword-arm ; I staggered, sank to the ground, and was nearly trodden to death, as the naval battalion, led by Lieutenant Percival of the *Adder*, rushed over me in full retreat, before the returning French. It was a divine mercy that they had spiked, and left in the rear, their great gun, otherwise I must have perished under its wheels.

Some time after this, I staggered up, and found that the negroes and mulattoes who wore the tricoloured cockade, were butchering our wounded. Inspired with new strength by the imminence of my danger, I hurried towards the end of the street, which presented a dreadful spectacle of bloodshed and destruction ; and there a horse passed me, dragging his dead rider, a French field-officer, by the bridle, which the poor fellow's left hand yet clutched with a death-grip. I grasped the rein with my teeth, as my right arm hung powerless by my side, wrenched away the dead man's hand with my left, and springing into the saddle, urged the terrified horse to a gallop, and Point à Petre, its flaming houses and blood-stained streets, were soon far behind me.

Mistaking the path our retreating troops pursued, I rode on without knowing whither ; my sole desire being to avoid

men of colour ; and so my scared steed sped over miles of a flat savannah.

Just as day was breaking, faint with toil, pain, and lassitude, I found the impossibility of longer keeping the saddle, and on dismounting, the horse galloped away and left me.

I was near a thick coppice. A little runnel, bordered by blue blossoms and crimson convolvuli, ran through the long prairie grass ; and in its tiny current, a flock of blue and green parrots were dipping their gaudy pinions ; but when I stooped to drink, they rose like a covey of fairy partridges, and flew screaming and whistling into the trees.

The sun was now up, and being somewhat refreshed by a draught from the pure, cool spring, I gazed wistfully about me, and found that I was near what appeared to be the house of a wealthy planter. Passing a handsome gate, I crossed a little lawn, which was bordered by a circle of maypole aloes, that towered to the height of thirty feet at least to their tufts of yellow foliage, and had green creepers festooned like garlands from stem to stem.

It was an old house of substantial aspect for the Antilles ; its sugar-mills were concealed by a thick grove of trees ; all was still around it, and its green jealousies remained closed ; but in the morning sun its white walls shone gaily, amid fences of golden and crimson-coloured flowers, while on each side of the old-fashioned French porch, there towered two lordly cedars, on the branches of which a number of parrots and other wild birds were perched coquetting and pluming their wings.

Sick with agony, want, and mortification for the result of our attack on Point à Petre, human nature could achieve no more for me ; and just as the house-door opened, I sank on the flight of steps which led to it.

An exclamation of mingled pity and astonishment from

a female voice fell upon my ear, and I looked up with haggard eyes.

Was it a dream?

I know not, for I fainted; but the fair face that hung over mine, as the light went out of my eyes, was that of—Amy Lee!



CHAPTER LXVI.

THE OBEAH NEGRO.

It seemed to me as if two or three days must have elapsed before recovering perfect consciousness, and such was the case; then I appeared to waken to it, as from the long and delirious lethargy of the dreadful yellow fever, for I had lost much more blood than I was aware of.

I found myself in bed—in a luxurious couch—and in a large and airy apartment. Its ceiling was lofty; painted a light azure and starred with gold; the flowing window-curtains, being sprinkled with lime-juice for coolness, imparted a delightful fragrance, which, with the summer odours that were wafted through the open jealousies, proved delicious to a feverish patient. Everything about me betokened wealth, splendour, and tropical luxury. From each of the three tall windows of my apartment, on which the flower-covered verandah without cast a chastening shadow, hung a basket of creeping plants, and in one of these a pair of beautiful humming-birds had built their little nests of cotton, pilfered no doubt, by their tiny beaks, from the fresh-bursting buds of the cotton-tree.

The intense stiffness, benumbed and leaden sensation in

my right arm, at once informed me, that the bones had been set, splinted, and bandaged, but by whom I knew not. There were dreams of soft female voices having spoken to me ; and memories of their faces seemed to float before me, amid the misty memories of pain and suffering ; but these were mere dreams, doubtless, like the vision of Amy Lee appearing at the porch of the villa, as I sank in agony and almost in despair on the steps that led to it.

After lying still for a time with closed eyes, I looked around me again, half in expectation that some *other* scene—perhaps a tent, a ship's cabin, a bivouac, or something equally familiar would display itself ; but no—the splendid bedchamber remained unchanged in all its details, save that it now had one other occupant than me.

A beautiful young girl, no doubt, the reader may suppose !

Not at all—nothing nearly so pleasant ; but a hideous old negro, who was slowly approaching on tiptoe, softly, and with his stealthy and glittering eyes fixed on mine. Danger was my first thought, but this old man was without any knife or weapon. His grey woolly locks straggled like horsehair under a blue cotton kerchief, which encircled his huge round caput, beneath a broad rush-plaited hat, in the band of which two short tobacco-pipes were jauntily stuck. His jacket and short wide trowsers were composed of white cotton striped with flaming red ; but his feet were bare like his breast, on which hung a necklace or fetish of old buttons, rusty nails, bits of broken glass, and green or scarlet parrots' feathers ; to all of which he attached, no doubt, some deep and cabalistic value. The tattooing which was visible on his black breast, indicated that in his own sun-scorched country he had been esteemed as a chief or warrior of note, before he had been compelled by the whip of the white man, to relinquish the hatchet and arrows for the

spade and hoe of the sugar-fields ; and now, as he drew nearer, I recognized an old acquaintance.

"Benoit," said I ; "Benoit."

"Ya—ya, massa le capitaine," he replied, showing all his yellow fangs ; "Benoit le Noir—you memory ob me, massa ?"

"Remember you, old fellow—of course I do !"

"Très bon ! I watch massa in his sleep—me an Obeah nigger," he added, handing to me a crystal jug containing a draught of some cool and medicated preparation, which wonderfully strengthened and revived me.

"Where am I, Benoit ?"

"In Carucueira."

"Where ?" I exclaimed with astonishment.

"La Grande Terre de Guadaloupe, him called now—Carucueira in the days of painted warriors."

"I have been ill—weak Benoit."

"Ya—massa le capitaine have leaden shot in him body."

"Impossible—my arm was broken by a ball which, however did not penetrate deep, though I have lost much blood."

"Oui—ya ; but shot go very fast in the air—massa le capitaine no see him enter."

"Ah, that is all bosh, old Snowball."

"Ah—pardonnez—mong Dew—ya, oui," continued poor Benoit, whose language was a strange medley ; "shot be in *here* massa."

"Where ?"

"In massa's arm, at elbow ; take him out, presto !—crack ! diable—in a minute."

"How ?" said I, half amused by his pertinacity.

Benoit deposited his broad hat upon the floor ; then sinking upon his knees he gravely took the fetish from his

neck, ran his black fingers over the trash which composed it, using many conjurations, mumbling like a Mahometan over his rosary, and bobbing like a Chinaman in a joss-house. Then approaching me with great solemnity in his face, and a curious and crafty leer in his eyes, he passed his hands gently over my wounded arm three times, in the style of a mesmeric professor. How the sensation was produced, I know not, but each time that he did so a nervous tremour pervaded the broken limb, and at the third pass a musket ball seemed to drop from my finger-points upon the bed.

"Bon, bon ! fetish good !" exclaimed Benoit, "massa le capitaine be soon cured now."

I had neither strength to laugh at the cunning of the Obeah negro, or to compliment this sleight of hand, by which, like others who pretend to be in league with Obi, and to have especial power through their *fetish*, he had obtained, I have no doubt, a tolerable livelihood among the ignorant and superstitious slaves, and exerted a great influence over them for good or for evil.

"Massa look astonished ! ah, mong Dew, that be nothing to Père Benoit le Noir ! There was a damn black nigger from le Looward isles come to me ill—berry ill ; ya—oui, so I cure him presto ! draw from him belly a big cannon-ball—jolly after that—damn him, hoe sugar and sing. Massa le capitaine tink ob that—ya oui. Capitaine bukra no savey him have *another* bullet here ?"

"Where ?"

"In him leg."

"In my leg ? no, no Quashy—I savey nothing of the kind."

"A big bullet there, though—mong Dew, Gorramighty ya oui !"

"Go ; you tease me by all this bosh," said I, impatiently.

"Me poor slave, but me known to Obi—me savey better

than bukra man," replied Benoit, resuming his fetish and broad-leaved castor, with a half-mock air of offended dignity ; "but le capitaine would like something to eat—just leetle picking?"

"Yes, thank you."

"Young leg ob monkey—bon, good, with pepper and pimento—très bon!"

"No, no."

"Guana—like big green lizard—tender, sweet—dam bon très good ; you savey it?"

"Stuff ; get me a bit of boiled chicken and a glass of Nevis wine ; but ere you go, tell me where I am, as I have naturally some curiosity about it."

"In the villa de Thoisy."

"What—in the house of Monsieur Thoisy, whom I saved from Scipio at the pass of Dos d'Ane!"

"Ya, massa, oui," replied the negro, with a grin from ear to ear ; but adding gravely, "but Massa de Thoisy be far happier if offered up to Obi."

"I believe he has some doubts of that, Benoit ; but how came *you* here?"

"Mamselle Eulalie—you memory ob her?"

"Yes, Benoit—how shall I ever forget her?"

"She sent me to Massa de Thoisy as a present—I served her father long, massa, berry faithful, and he loved me well, though a poor black man, berry well—bo-hoo-o-o-o!" and with a true negro outburst of grief, the old fellow left me, weeping like a child.

CHAPTER LXVII.

M. DE THOISY.

WEARIED by this conversation, troubled by the recollection of poor Eulalie, which conflicted with the strange but vivid vision of Amy Lee, I closed my eyes and strove to sleep; but lay long awake, gazing through the open jealousies upon the verdant lawn, its circle of tall aloes, and the shrubbery of a garden that lay before the windows, where the flaming foliage of the *Bois immortel*, the dark green leaves of the laurel and the blossoms of the jasmine grew together; where flowering parasites of unknown names drooped a hundred and fifty feet from the trees to which they clung—creepers of wondrous beauty and luxuriance all intertwined like the mystic serpents in a Celtic tomb or Runic stone.

While lying thus between sleeping and waking in an uneasy doze, a sound fell on my ear. I thought the figure of a female drew close and bent over me. I dreamt that I was a child again, and that my mother was there, with her calm, earnest eyes, and sad but gentle face, hovering close to mine.

Tears came to my eyes; I started up—the figure drew abruptly back, and lo! there stood by my bedside a lovely dark-eyed girl, with rich golden hair. She sprang away with a step like a startled fawn, and then I sank again to sleep, for the noon of a tropical summer day was at its zenith, and lassitude overpowered me.

This was all very pleasant and romantic; but I had soon other visitors, in the shape of huge mosquitoes whose bites

were like red-hot pins thrust into the flesh ; flocks of moths, giant in size and diabolical in aspect, that dropped, soft and clammy, on my hands and face at night ; and all kinds of entomological and ereptological specimens of little winged devils with sharp snouts or stings and appetites that seemed insatiable.

The information of my sable guardian proved correct. I was really in the splendid and hospitable mansion of M. de Thoisy, who visited my apartment next day, to express the pleasure he felt in being able to make me some return for the great service I had done him on that terrible night in the camp of the negroes.

The old royalist planter was a fair specimen of a class now entirely extinct—the French gentleman of the old school or the last days of the monarchy ; a time which we associate with periwigs and wide sleeves, ruffles and small swords ; studied politeness, great suavity, and an almost ferocious punctilio—a sense of honour so keen as to be carried to an extent quite perilous in the old days of duelling ; but his soft and kind manner was in every way calculated to win, and impress me with the conviction that I was quite conferring an obligation upon him in availing myself of his hospitality.

He was the representative of one of the oldest and best families in the island ; thus all his stories and recollections were, like his predilections, somewhat antiquated. One of his ancestors was the *Sieur de Thoisy*, who was appointed “by his most Christian Majesty,” as he always phrased it, in 1645, lieutenant-general of the French Antilles, and seneschal of St. Christopher’s ; and the armorial bearings of this personage, encircled by the collar of the *Ordre Militaire des Chevaliers de l’Epée*, were carved in walnut wood over the doors of several of the rooms, and stuccoed on the ceilings.

For several days M. de Thoisy was the only person I saw, save my doctor and Benoit le Noir.

"I fear you must have lost much money by the revolt of the slaves," said I, on one occasion.

"I lost nearly the whole of *them*," said he, "and slaves are money in the Antilles. However, I mean to follow the fortunes of Messieurs les Comtes d'Artois and Provence, who have resolved to make their home in Edinburgh—the capital d'Ecosse. I am taking measures to transfer all the money I possess to Britain; the Antilles are no longer a safe abiding-place for a French royalist gentleman, especially for such as have the misfortune to be born like me, monsieur, with *de* prefixed to their name. No, no, *pardieu*! M. de Thoisy will never condescend to wear the tricoloured cockade, to be plain Citoyen Thoisy, and hear his wife and daughters called citoyennes by a vile canaille who fraternize with savages and wear the bonnet rouge?"

"So you have a family, monsieur?" said I, as my dream of two dark eyes and of the golden curls occurred to me, and my curiosity was excited.

"I have *three* daughters, M. le Capitaine," said he coldly; and then, as if to change the subject, added, "this is the second time those canaille from Congo and Angola have revolted in Guadaloupe."

"The second time?"

"Yes, *sacre*!"

"When did it occur before?"

"Why, *parbleu*! in 1656."

"A long time ago?"

"During the reign of his most Christian Majesty Louis XIV.," said monsieur, bowing low at the name.

"And scarcely worth remembering now," I replied, smiling.

"Pardon me, M. le Capitaine," said the old gentleman, bowing again so low that his wig nearly fell off; "but men of my years have long memories. We have always had vast cargoes of slaves from Angola; but in that year they were, most unwisely, trained to the use of arms by the lieutenant-governor, M. Houelle: thus encouraged, on discovering their own strength, two Angolians conceived the project (like our precious rascal Scipio) of exterminating all the male whites, but of preserving the females for wives, and of crowning two kings of the race of Angola—one in Basse Terre, and the other in Grande Terre. A night for the rising was named and ere morning every white man in Guadaloupe would have been barbarously slain; but as God and St. Louis would have it, certain slaves from Cape de Verde, who loved not those of Angola, informed the governor of what was impending; so the whites were all accoutred and ready. The Angolians rose in arms; a fifteen days' conflict ensued, and all Grande Terre was ravaged before they were crushed. One-half were shot, hanged, or burned, and all who were taken were restored to slavery; but, *sacre!* not until their ears had been shred off by a huge pair of shears, to mark them for the future."

"This seems the most antique house I have seen in the Antilles," said I wearily, to change the subject; but every remark touched some hidden spring, and produced a reminiscence.

"Ah, *mon Dieu*, you have observed that!" exclaimed my host with pleasure, for this house was his vanity—his little weakness. "It was built by M. Aubert, who was governor of Guadaloupe in 1643, for his most Christian Majesty Louis XIII. That gay, artful, and dazzling blonde, Madame Fayolle, occupied this very apartment—tradition says, this very bed. *Corbœuf!* monsieur, think of that!"

"I am greatly honoured, perhaps; but who was she?"

" *Mon Dieu !* he has never heard of Madame Fayolle ! "

" I regret that I have not."

" *Est-il possible !* "

" On my honour."

" *Tête Dieu*—you astonish me ! "

" 'Tis the case, nevertheless," said I, feeling more amused by his surprise than ashamed of my own ignorance.

" She was here in Guadaloupe all that Mesdames Pompadour, Du Barri, or Maintenon, were at Versailles or the Louvre. Her beauty and intrigues made her queen of the island, as I shall have the honour of telling you."

" Another story," said I, with a well-bred grimace.

" Oui, Monsieur le Capitaine," said the old gentleman, making three such profound bows, that at each of them I felt my wounded arm twinge. In the days of M. Aubert's government, I mean during the reign of——"

" Ah, his most Christian Majesty——"

" Louis XIII. ; exactly monsieur, our colonists were sadly in want of wives, and it is not every one who can realize a Venus in a copper-coloured Carib squaw, or a tattooed Congo negress, with a fish-bone in her nostrils ; so the Frenchmen in Guadaloupe tilled the land, sowed, reaped, boiled the sugar, pressed the vines, and made money in peace and profound tranquillity, until a certain Madame Fayolle conceived the brilliant, but unfortunate idea of bringing a stock of handsome young damsels from Paris to Guadaloupe. You may imagine the excitement their arrival caused among Frenchmen who had not seen a white female face for years. Scarcely had the ship's anchor dropped into the roadstead of Basse Terre, ere she was surrounded by men in boats, clamouring to get on board, all clad in their best attire, displaying purses of money, and striving to pay their court, and make selections. *Parbleu !* the rape of the Sabines was a joke to it ! They fought, bit, scratched, and

stabbed each other ; several of their boats were overturned, and thus many of their crews, instead of rushing into the jaws of matrimony, found themselves in those of the blue sharks that were gliding about in the waves below.

“ From that day Guadaloupe became rent by jealousies, intrigues, and contentions ; and thus white men were chained, and scourged, or imprisoned, and slain by their fellows on the merest pretences ; and all this came to pass through the loves and lovers of Madame Fayolle and the demoiselles she had brought hither from the Faubourgs of Paris to seek their fortunes ; but I shall have the honour of telling more about all this another time, as I possess the authentic records, which were prepared by my ancestor, M. de Thoisy, for the special perusal of his most Christian Majesty——”

“ If you could afford me some information about the movements of our troops,” said I, wearily, “ I would be much more grateful to you, monsieur.”

“ *Bon !* Monsieur le Capitaine. After falling back from Point à Petre, where Citoyen Victor Hugues—*sacre !*—had his Republican mustachoes singed pretty well, M. le Général Grey has occupied, with his whole forces, all the ground between Point St. Jean and the Bay of Mahault, having erected many batteries of mortars and 24-pounders, thus giving perfect security to Basse Terre, while Admiral Jervis has blocked up the harbour by his ships. There is a species of truce just now, so all is quiet ; but perfect peace shall never be established either here or in Europe until his Most Christian Majesty Louis XVII.—the poor boy in the Temple—is placed on the throne of his father. *Ah ! mon Dieu ! mon Dieu !* we live in strange times. Do you know, M. le Capitaine, that I can remember—but *mille pardons*—I weary you—another day we shall talk of these things ; meantime, adieu.”

But this prosaical old gentleman did not leave until he had

detailed the only affair which interested me in his conversation—the defence of Fort Matilda by our troops, which I may briefly mention, as I heard it from others, rather than from him.

Lieutenant Colonel Colin Grahame, of the Fusiliers, was appointed to command the troops in Basse Terre, and to him fell the task of defending the camp at Beville, where he was forced to surrender on the 6th of October, his force having been reduced to one hundred and twenty-five officers and men !

Three companies of ours were now engaged in the desperate defence of Fort Matilda, under Lieutenant-General Prescott, a stern soldier of the old school, who was wont to sit on the ramparts, smoking a “yard of clay,” with all the gravity of a pasha in his harem, or a sachem with the great pipe of peace, while shot whistled and shells exploded about his ears.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

A DISCOVERY.

ERE LONG, I was advanced from cooling drinks and chicken-broth to the dignity of turtle-soup (as it can only be made in the Antilles), dashed with lime-juice, and a long glass of Madeira after. Then I became quite convalescent, and after a careful toilet was one day led by M. de Thoisy to the drawing-room, to be introduced, with great formality, to his family circle. I was first presented to Madame, a little and somewhat shrivelled old lady, of rather aristocratic aspect, with hair almost white as snow. She bowed very low thrice, with an old-fashioned courtesy, and patted my cheek kindly while thanking me in very good terms as her husband's preserver; and now, as good Madame de Thoisy bears no more important part in my story, and was chiefly famous for the conserving of limes, citrons, guava, and so forth, we shall refer to her no more in these pages.

"Monsieur," continued De Thoisy, introducing me to three very handsome young girls in succession, "my daughters—Georgette, Claire, and Julie—and now I hope you all know each other."

Claire and Julie were both blondes, with complexions miraculously fair, considering their French blood; but in Georgette, the tallest, most fully rounded—in short, the most beautiful, as she seemed to please and fill the eye, I recognized the black orbs, the long lashes, and the bright golden hair of my supposed dream, for this fair French girl in her eyes and tresses had that remarkable contrast which we so seldom find, and which becomes so dazzling, when brilliant.

These three sisters were all accomplished; they played

and sang well, and were, I afterwards discovered, full of vivacity and drollery, which made them very charming friends.

"They have all been dying with curiosity——"

"Pardon, papa, say gratitude," urged Georgette.

"Well, with gratitude, M. le Capitaine," continued M. de Thoisy, "to see one to whom we owe so much; for, *parbleu!* if they set some value on my life, be assured that I set a great deal more."

"Dear, dear papa," said little Claire, "do not talk of it; ah! how terrified he must have been—now, was he not, M. le Capitaine?"

"Terrified!" reiterated De Thoisy, ere I could reply to the pretty questioner; "*mon Dieu!* I should think so! Though there never was a De Thoisy, either in France or the Antilles, who feared death, there *are* ways of dying pleasantly; but to be fricasseed alive, joint by joint, under the jaws of the Congo fetish, is not one."

"Ah! monsieur," said Julie, "how much we owe you for saving our dear papa!"

"But, with a single company of white soldiers, was it prudent of you to attack a thousand savages?" asked Georgette.

"*Merci,*" exclaimed De Thoisy; "my Georgette is becoming quite a little general!"

"It was not prudent, perhaps, mademoiselle," said I: "but I had Lord Kildonan's orders to obey, in the first place; and, in the second, there are times, such as that night in the pass of the Dos d'Ane, when the best prudence is rashness or courage."

"Bon! M. Comte de Provence, brother of his most Christian Majesty Louis XVI., could not have spoken better than M. le Capitaine," said her father. "Then you forget, Georgette, that the soldiers monsieur commanded were *Les*

Fusiliers Royals Ecossais, and in old France we have a proverb which says *Fier comme un brave Ecossais !* for there was a time when, like the valiant and faithful Irish, the countrymen of M. le Capitaine, were the best bulwarks of the French throne, and of the children of St. Louis."

M. de Thoisy raised his hat as he spoke—he always did so when speaking of the royal line of France ; for, like the true-hearted adherents of the Stuarts, this old gentleman clung to the Bourbons in their exile—the withered branch of a fallen tree ; and under the protection of *our* outposts, had placed on his hat the fatal *cocarde blanche*, which had subjected so many to the platoon, the gallows, and the guillotine.

Our mutual introductions over, inquiries about the state of my wounded arm followed ; it was, of course, still in a sling, made for me, it appeared, by Georgette ; and then ensued one of those little pauses which often occur, before people become thoroughly acquainted. Suddenly Georgette said :

"Mamma, you quite forget that we have residing with us, a lady who is a countrywoman of Monsieur le Capitaine. He must know her husband, who commands the batteries at Bay Mahault, and I am sure they will be enchanted to meet. Ah—here she comes !" she added gaily, as a young lady without a bonnet, but with a long-fringed green parasol, entered the drawing-room from a species of conservatory which opened off it, only that its walls were all Venetian blinds and not glass, which would have been intolerable in such a climate.

"Madame," said M. de Thoisy, hastening forward, "permit me to introduce the young officer of whom you have heard so much—he who saved my life and—ah, *mon Dieu !* what is the matter—what have I done ?"

The old French planter, who had been bowing as if he

meant to jerk his wig off, might well exclaim thus, or hearing the interjection of mingled surprise and joy which escaped me, for the lady who approached was no other than Amy Lee !

Amy Lee, here in Guadaloupe, looking more radiant and more beautiful than I had ever imagined her, with jetty black hair exquisitely smoothed, a white muslin dress that waved in gauzy folds around her, and a shawl of some equally light material, but of broad black and golden stripes, floating over her fair plump shoulders. Her dark eyes sparkled merrily, but now it seemed as if Amy had a more finished, a more fashionable, and decidedly a more confident air, than the girl I used to love and flirt with at Applewood.

She bowed politely, as, with an inimitable bearing of her proud head and ample skirt, she swept up to the sofa, and seated herself beside Madame de Thoisy, saying to me :

" I am so happy to find, sir, that you are so far recovered as to be able to leave your room. No doubt you will soon join the regiment ? "

" Amy ! " I exclaimed in a breathless voice.

" Sir—I beg pardon—did you speak ? "

" Yes—— "

" My name *is* Amy," she said, with a well-bred smile of perplexity, looking me full in the face through her clear eyes.

She evidently did not recognize me in my uniform ; for all I had seen and undergone of late had changed me very much in figure, bearing, and expression.

" Do you *not* know me ? " I asked almost imploringly, and she replied :

" Not personally, sir ; but I have the pleasure of knowing that you are an officer in my husband's regiment, and one whom he esteems most highly."

"Your husband's regiment!" I reiterated in bewilderment, and quite oblivious of the presence of our host and his family, to whom all this was an enigma.

"Yes—but you were absent when I joined him from England. He is now in command of the batteries at Bay Mahault, and always calls you his favourite comrade."

"I am much obliged to him," said I coldly, and then added impetuously, "But who the deuce *is* your husband?"

"The Earl of Kildonan, senior Lieutenant-Colonel of the Scots Fusiliers," replied Amy drily; "and you, sir?"

"I am Oliver Ellis—don't you remember me, Amy? Oh, you cannot have forgotten Oliver, whom you were wont to love, and who loved you so much, at dear old Applewood."

"What! are you my old friend—my lover Oliver?" she exclaimed, with a gleam of pleasure in her charming eyes, and a burst of merry laughter—so merry that it served, even more than her marriage, to demolish a very romantic structure which I had been raising mentally. "I am thunderstruck, but oh, most happy to see you—to meet you again! We were such dear good friends——"

"Friends—rather; come, this is very good!" said I under my breath and with indescribable annoyance.

"You must tell me all about this, and how it came to pass. Come, sit here between Georgette and me, and tell us all about yourself directly," she added, taking my left hand in hers; the wounded right was too tender yet to brook being meddled with. I felt confused and piqued, for although we had heard in the regiment that the earl had married a Miss Lee in Scotland, and that his countess, after joining him in Guadaloupe, had been nearly taken by the French at the recapture of La Fleur d'Epée, I would as readily have conceived that his wife might prove to be queen of Sheba as my old love Amy Lee, of Applewood.

So there was a great destruction of a little romance in a moment.

I had no reason to find any fault with Amy ; and yet it seemed as if a sudden pique at her made Georgette's gentle eyes more dark, and her golden hair more bright than ever.

I took my seat between them.



CHAPTER LXIX.

GEORGETTE.

A FEW weeks rolled delightfully away at the Villa de Thoisy, which my host informed me was an exact copy—so far as West-Indian requirements would permit—of his ancient ancestral mansion at the town of Thoisy, where, as he added, “one of the most Christian kings had kept one of his mistresses,” on the small river Chalaronne, in old France. I rapidly became so well, that serious thoughts of rejoining the regiment at Bay Mahault occurred to me, but Lord Kildonan in a letter to the countess, which was brought by Tom Telfer, mentioned that I need not hurry myself, as all was quiet on the side of the island which was occupied by Victor Hugues and his particoloured forces.

Occasionally Haystone, Bruce, and others of ours, rode over to see me, and spend an evening with the de Thoisy girls ; then we had always music and dancing, and, despite the heat of the weather, we red-coats flew about like fireflies in the waltz.

And how shall I describe the languor and charm of a *tête-à-tête*—flirtation, if you will—in a night in Guadaloupe,

when windows, doors, and green jealousies are all thrown open, to admit the aromatic breeze that comes over savannahs of spices and sugar-canes, through forests laden with golden fruit, from the moonlit sea that rippled before the trade wind ; or when seated in a bower the green leaves and brilliant flowers of which are visible as at noonday in the radiance of the queen of night, as she careered through the deep blue of a tropical sky ; or when wandering in the avenues of fan-palms, with no light but the flaming summit of La Souffrière, or the stars that were reflected in the waters of the Rivière Salée.

An undefinable sentiment of pique at Amy Lee determined me on falling in love with some one else. Of course, in this mood I soon did so ; and Amy's presence, instead of being a bar, spurred me on : thus, ere many days were past, I was in love with Georgette.

I have said that she was beautiful ; but, of course, every lover deems the object of his admiration to be so—or at least to exhibit perfection in some point. When her soft dark eyes met mine, I felt as if our very souls became incorporated, so deep and winning was their expression ; and when she spoke, every pulse seemed to beat responsive to her own. To be constantly with such a girl, and *not* fall in love with her, was impossible. We drove, rode, talked, danced, and sketched together. As some one says,—

She sketch'd ; the vale, the wood, the beach,
Grew lovelier from her pencil's shading.
She botanised ; I envied each
Young blossom in her boudoir fading.
She warbled Handel ; it was grand—
She might make Catalani jealous.
She touch'd the organ,—I could stand
For hours and hours to blow the bellows.

Yet I was always so timid in Georgette's presence, that

I envied the cool impudence with which Haystone made love (without meaning it), in true garrison fashion, either to Claire or Julie, which of them mattered not a straw to him ; for example, when leaning over the latter at the piano, I overheard a conversation in this style :—

“ You have a charming bracelet, Mademoiselle Julie.”

“ Papa’s gift on my last birthday. Are not the pearls magnificent ? ”

“ On *another* arm than yours, Julie, they would be dazzling.”

“ On another arm ?—monsieur, I do not understand.”

“ Are you so artless as not to perceive that the whiteness of your arm darkens even these snowy pearls ? ” whispered Haystone, impressively.

Poor Julie sighed, and played the deuce with her music, for Rowland Haystone was a handsome rogue, and pleased her eye.

On another occasion I heard Claire say to him,—

“ It is no use saying that you love me, monsieur, for I don’t believe in you ; we quite understood each other.”

“ To know you, dear Claire, and not love you, would be——”

“ What—something very tremendous, no doubt ? ”

“ A reproach to any man.”

“ Of course ! ” said she, drooping her eyelashes to hide a twinkle of drollery.

“ But less so, however, to one of the Twenty-First.”

“ Indeed, wherefore ? ”

“ Because we are the most inflammable corps in the service.”

Claire burst into a fit of laughter, for this “ Chatham style ” of love-making, in which there is always a dash of impertinence, amused her exceedingly, but I was not sorry when Haystone, with his company, was despatched by the Earl, on a “ nigger-hunt,” into the great savannah of Basse Terre,

for by him and others of the corps, I was frequently rallied on what they termed "my fancy for a French girl." The countess, who perceived me to be annoyed one day, by some of my comrades' banter which she had overheard, handed a volume of Zimmerman, with a significant smile, as we promenaded together in the verandah : the name of Georgette was written on a leaf, which Amy had marked with pencil, and the paragraph she indicated ran thus ; and as nobody reads Zimmerman now, I may as well give it at full length :—

"Of what value are all the babblings and vain boastings of society, when compared to that domestic felicity which we experience in the company and conversation of an amiable woman, whose charms awaken the dormant faculties of the soul, and fill the mind with finer energies ; whose smiles prompt our enterprises, and whose assistance ensures success ; who inspires us with congenial greatness and sublimity ; who with judicious penetration, weighs and examines our thoughts, our actions, our whole character ; who observes all our foibles, warns us with sincerity of their consequences, and reforms us with gentleness and affection ; who by a tender communication of her thoughts and observations conveys new instruction to our minds, and, by pouring the warm and generous feelings of her heart into our bosoms, animates us incessantly to the exercise of every virtue, and completes the polished perfection of our character by the soft allurements of love and delightful concord of her sentiments. In such an intercourse, all that is noble and virtuous in human nature is preserved within the breast, and every evil propensity dies away !"

"It is true—very true," said I.

"What is true, monsieur ?" asked Georgette, whom the countess (for so I must name Amy Lee now) had artfully contrived to place next me, while she herself disappeared.

"A passage I was reading in your Zimmerman, mademoiselle," said I, colouring with confusion.

"Show it to me?"

She read it, and as she did so, the rich bloom deepened on her cheek, and she closed the volume with a timid smile, saying artlessly—

"But where is all this perfection to be found?"

"In you, mademoiselle—in you, Georgette," said I, in a scarcely audible voice.

"What—are you about to make love to me?"

"If I may be permitted, dear Georgette!"

"Oh, but you have been in love *before*," said she, with a smile of drollery; "now say, have you not, for I know better."

"Georgette, people often have little fancies."

"And you have one for me—*très bon*!"

"Georgette!"

"Monsieur hangs his head with a very pleading air; you were in love, but you joined the army; alas! you see that ambition outlives love."

"Georgette—you are quite a philosopher!" said I, recovering, and taking up her tone, which was somewhat bantering, as if unwilling to believe me; but I could perceive that her poor little hands trembled very much as she plucked the lemon-water flowers, and her colour came and went with every pulsation.

"Georgette—dearest Georgette," I urged.

"Monsieur?"

"I was about to say something——"

"What?"

"That I tenderly love you."

"Love me!" she reiterated in a whisper; "ah, do not say so—at least so earnestly."

"Why?"

"I—I know not—it is no use loving me, monsieur ; but we see so much of each other—that—and is it not a strange chance which throws us so frequently together ?"

"Do not term it chance, Georgette."

"What then ?" she asked, with a smile, as she regained courage.

"Now, monsieur, what *do* you mean ?"

"*Destiny*—believe it is destiny, dear, dear Georgette ?" said I, clasping her waist with my hands.

Poor Georgette trembled more, blushed deeper, and then grew very pale, but did not repel me.

From the verandah we strolled into the gardens, where more than an hour glided imperceptibly over us. What we said, or left unsaid, would occupy a good many pages ; but being of no interest to any one but ourselves, need not be rehearsed here ; yet, ere we returned to the villa, to hear old M. George de Thoisy's everlasting recollections of bygone times—to taste and praise Madame's preserves ; to resume our evening music and gaiety with Claire, Julie, Bruce, and Rowland Haystone—Georgette and I had exchanged our rings, and sealed our troth with gifts dearer, but less tangible than gold.

But the next and most formidable move in the matter was to open the trenches to M. de Thoisy, a man full of old French prejudices, and who, with all his aristocratic predilections, had other, and perhaps more commercial views for his three beautiful daughters than portioning them off to the penniless captains and subs of the Scots Fusiliers.

CHAPTER LXX.

A CRISIS.

SOME days after this, Georgette and I were in the recess of a window of the drawing-room, ostensibly to watch the sunbeams casting their broad flakes of hazy light athwart the wooded hills, and on the slopes that lay between them and the sea. We were hand in hand, but silent and full of our own thoughts, which a gentle pressure from time to time alone indicated.

"My dear Georgette," said I; "I envy your peaceful seclusion here."

"You envy us!"

"Yes."

"You, a soldier—one who has led a life of bustle and excitement, and who, by the account of his friends, has been a veritable Wandering Jew?"

"Nevertheless, 'tis true; I envy this rural solitude; here we are quite lost in a forest of flowers, aloes, and palms."

"How romantic we are becoming!" said she merrily; "but when our tastes are so different, monsieur——"

"Ah, do not say so!"

"Even our races, and our creeds," she added, sighing; "so be pleased to say how or why?"

"Well; in your heart there seems to be filled here all the domestic void I feel in my own—a circle of near and dear relations. You have a father to consult and to embrace. Mine is in his grave, and I scarcely ever knew him. You have a mother, who, whenever she kisses you, makes me think of mine whom I left in her old age; you have

two sisters, each beautiful as yourself, Georgette, who, each time that I behold them near you, make me think of my poor little Lotty in Scotland, far away."

"Ecosse ! I have heard papa talk of that country ; the sun never shines in England ; and an old Abbé once assured me that the moon is only seen sometimes in Scotland ; now tell me, M. l'Ecosseais, is that true ?"

"One day you shall see for yourself."

"Oh, Oliver," said she, almost weeping ; "papa will never consent to your loving me."

"Do not say so, Georgette ; for though I have my own fears on the subject, your misgivings make me wretched."

"Come, we must not be cast down," said she, with sudden gaiety, for she was full of impulses ; and shaking back her rich golden hair, while her beautiful dark eyes sparkled with love and light, she opened the piano, and ran her rapid little fingers over the ivory keys.

"I shall sing to you."

"Thanks, Georgette."

"But what shall it be ?"

"Whatever you please."

"Well then,—

Ah, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira !
Les aristocrates à la lanterne !"

"Georgette !"

"What is the matter ?"

"Can you profane your dear lips by a song so horrible ?"

"So republican, you would say. Ah, *mon Dieu*," said she, shrugging her white shoulders, "I only meant to be droll, and you actually scold me already. Well—is this better ?"

Halte là ! halte là !
La Garde Royale est là !

And she waggishly sang a verse of this song, which was wont to be a favourite with the Chevalier Dutriel.

"'Tis a camp ditty, and if mamma hears me, she will not be pleased. Ah," she added, turning over her music, "here is something you will like better :—

Adieu, charmant pays de France !
Que je dois tant chérir,
Berceau de mon heureuse enfance,
Adieu, te quitter c'est mourir !"

and so on, she sang with exquisite sweetness the *Adieux de Marie Stuart*. We were, I thought, alone ; my arm was around her, and turning her dear little face to mine, I kissed her tenderly.

"*Morbleu !*" said an angry voice close by.

I turned, and saw her father surveying us sternly, as he appeared with unpleasant suddenness at one of the drawing-room windows, which unfolded to the tiled floor of the verandah. Striking his gold-headed cane with great irritation on the tiles, with his wig and old-fashioned coat, he bore the closest resemblance to the angry Father of the old comedy that ever I beheld.

"Retire, mademoiselle," said he ; "and as for *you*, M. le Capitaine, you will be pleased—*sacre !*—to follow me to the library."

Georgette retired—she almost fled, while I followed Père de Thoisy into his library, which was decorated in a very florid style, after that of his late Most Christian Majesty's "snuggery" in the Louvre. Coldly, but politely, the old gentleman at once brought me "to book" on the subject of my intentions.

"Monsieur," said he, "I owe you much—my family owe you much ; but you must pardon me demanding on what terms you are with my eldest daughter ?"

"Monsieur de Thoisy," I began, not knowing what the deuce to say ; "I beseech you to consider——"

"To the point at once," said he drily, "to the point, M. le Capitaine, as a man of honour, for such I deem you."

"M. de Thoisy, I love her."

"*Parbleu !* I dreaded some such *dénoûment* as this ! but is it honest—is it a fair return for my hospitality—my unceasing kindness to you ?"

"We cannot control our hearts, my dear sir."

"But we may control our passions !" said he impetuously ; "and I believe there is no heart in the matter."

"Alas ! sir, do not talk thus ; what heart could have escaped here ? If I had not fallen in love with Georgette, I must have done so with Julie—if not with Julie, with Claire ; for three girls more winning and charming——"

"*Sacre !* I can understand all that ; but tell me, does Georgette love you in return ?"

"I rejoice in the hope——"

"Only the *hope* ?"

"In the promise—the avowal that she does love me."

"Georgette will be rich, M. le Capitaine ; I can give each of my girls a portion fit for any demoiselle at the Court of the Most Christian King (the hat was raised at these words), while you, monsieur, have only your epaulettes and your sword."

"My epaulettes I won at the risk of my life in the struggle we have commenced to save French Royalists from French Republicans ; what other mission brought us here ? My sword, M. de Thoisy, saved you from a dreadful death, when all your francs and livres would have failed to do so."

"*Parbleu !* you are right—pardon me," said the old French gentleman, who did not lack generosity.

"Georgette's wealth would be quite enough for two ; but I shall make over to her, or to you," said I, by a happy

thought, and with an air of splendid generosity, "a ship that I possess."

"A ship?"

"A ship containing thirty millions of pieces of eight."

"*Mon Dieu!* M. le Capitaine, are you in your senses?" exclaimed De Thoisy, holding up his hands.

"Quite," said I, while M. de Thoisy elevated his shoulders to his ears, and his eyebrows to the roots of his periwig.

"Where is this ship—what is this you tell me?—what is her name?"

"*La Lima.*"

"That sounds Spanish."

"She was Spanish."

"Thirty millions of pieces of eight!"

"I give you my word of honour that I can put you in possession of such a ship, as her existence is known to me alone."

"Is it credible—*mille tonnerres!*—can it be?"

"You believe me?"

The old French gentleman laid his hand upon his breast, and replied by a profound bow.

"But will monsieur be so good as explain?"

I then related my history of the sunken galleon in the Isle of Tortoises, and he heard with growing wonder my detail of her exact position in the cavern, and the treasure she contained.

"Thirty millions of pieces of eight—ah! Marie, *Mère de Dieu!* One must boil a good many acres of sugar-cane to realize such a sum as that!"

"Well, take her, monsieur, and all she contains—but give me your daughter."

"M. le Capitaine—Georgette is yours."

* * * * *

CHAPTER LXXI.

CONCLUSION.

SIX months after the interview related here, I found myself on the brow of an eminence which overlooks the little wooded dell wherein lies the village in which the first chapter of this story opens, and where my mother's little cottage stands.

The month was October, and the russet hues of autumn, lent a sombre aspect to the evening landscape. The village and the scene were all unchanged as when I saw them before ; and it was difficult for me to realize the events and years that had passed since last I stood there. But I had still on the uniform of a Scots Fusilier ; Rowland Haystone was by my side, and I had left Georgette fatigued with her journey and our long voyage home in the *Adder*, at an hotel in town, while accompanied by my friend and comrade, I proceeded on foot to the residence of my mother.

The red crisped leaves whirled on the evening wind ; a ruddy gleam played on the windows of the wayside houses from the coal fires within and a warm glow glared across the road from the smith's forge, where we heard the clang of a hammer on the resounding anvil.

The purple radiance of the set sun yet lingered on the heath-clad summits of the distant hills, whose long and wavy line spread far away to the westward ; and every feature in the landscape, and every sound that fell on the ear, spoke to me of *home*, and filled my heart with a strange combination of joy and sadness.

Since those days, a railway has effected a great change in our little village. *Now*, an excursion train shoots ten

thousand passengers through it at the rate of forty miles per hour. *Then*, its visitors were few. The war-worn soldier, travelling afoot with his knapsack, and with his memories of Granby, Cornwallis, and Abercrombie ; the Heights of Abraham, and the Bay of Aboukir ; the old familiar pedlar with his pack of trinkets and his blarney ; the swarthy and uncouth gipsies, who made horn spoons and milking-pails ; or the weary wayfarer with his proverbial staff and bundle, came there at times, leisurely, slowly, and surely ; pausing on the brow of the hill, ere they descended into the densely-wooded valley, where the red mountain burn brawled hoarsely under an old bridge of the monkish times, or halted to drink a stoup of brown ale, or of limpid usquebaugh, at the old village inn, ere they pushed further on their journey into the busier world beyond.

Now, a giant viaduct, that might remind one of Rome or of Tivoli, save that its numerous arches are built of flaming red brick, spans, high in air, the wooded dell, leaping, as it were, from hill to hill ; and then the huge train clatters and screams with its flaring red lights and brass-mounted engine, as it tears along with its living freight, or with countless trucks of luggage,—on, on, and on, as with a roar like thunder, it vanishes into the bowels of a tunnelled mountain. In those days, a newspaper which came once weekly, to the minister, served to inform the whole village of the doings of “the Corsican tyrant ;” of the battle of Camperdown, and the glories of Trafalgar ; but *now*, we heard how the Guards and Highlanders went up the heights of Alma, and of the valour of “the thin red streak” at Balaclava, as soon as the citizens of the great metropolis,—for we have our own electric wire as well as they.

Strange as it may seem in these our days of cheap postage and swift communication, in consequence of the wandering life I had led, and the desultory nature of our

operations by land and sea in the Antilles, I had never heard from my home since leaving it, nor had any letters of mine been received ; and thus, with a heart swollen by anxiety and mournful recollections, I made a rapid survey of the scene, dreading—I knew not what !

An aged thorn-tree that had overhung the road for centuries, and whereon many an outlaw had swung in the times of old—a tree whose gnarled branches I was wont to climb, had been cut down, and its *absence* gave me a shock, so sensitive did vague apprehension make me. The roads and paths were all familiar as the faces of old friends ; in boyhood I had traversed them a thousand times, seeking bird-nests, rabbit-holes, and scarlet berries in autumn.

The old manse recalled Dr. Twaddel the minister, with his white hair, his curved paunch, and his old bunch of red gold seals that hung thereat—and my poor mother's visit to him about *me*. How sadly I smiled when thinking of his monitory tones !—and there too, was the ancient church with its ivy-shrouded belfry, wherein an owl nestled by day and screamed by night. The old village signboards, and the old village sounds were around me ; and now I was at the gate of the garden, in which Lotty and I used to plant flowers and shrubs—shrubs that had since grown to veritable trees ; and *now* after all my wanderings, after ploughing the great deep, and having had the roar of battle in my ear, and seen the colours of the Fusiliers riven to rags by shot and shell, I felt like a boy again when standing on my mother's threshold.

I was close to the first starting-place of the soul, yet my heart sank within me !

I was so full of anxious thoughts, that Haystone (rightly dreading lest strangers instead of friends might meet me) hastily rang the bell, and after speaking to a servant, returned, saying cheerily—

"All right, my boy—the old lady is alive and well."

"Thank God!" said I, as we were ushered in.

I stood once more within the little parlour (how very small it seemed?), on the walls of which the engravings of Wolfe and Cornwallis were yet hanging with my father's sword and gilded gorget—and my mother was before me, paler, thinner, and it might be more bent with years than when I saw her last. Her little work-basket, and a book or two, with her spectacles, were by her side, and a great sleek tom-cat was dozing on the hearthrug, in the warm glow of the fire.

On the entrance of two officers in uniform, the old lady rose with surprise and some alarm; it was evident that her seclusion was seldom broken.

A chair stood opposite, and seemed to say that Lotty had just left it,—to adjust her hair, or do something about her toilet, no doubt. I was trembling with emotion, and Haystone, who dearly loved a scene, and feared I might frustrate the effect he intended to produce, now said,—

"You must pardon us, madam; but we are two officers of the Scots Fusiliers, who were passing through the village, and hearing that you resided here, have called to pay our respects to the widow of one whose memory is still cherished in our regiment."

"For his sake, gentlemen, you are doubly welcome," replied my mother tremulously, as a film overspread her spectacles, and her heart warmed to the red-coats; "I was with the army in America; my husband marched with his regiment to fight the enemy on the banks of the Hudson; the firing was heavy all that dreadful day; and ere the sunset, I—I was a widow, and my children were fatherless! It was the will of God, and the chance of war."

"Your children," I stammered; "had you more than Lo—than Miss Ellis?"

"Sir, I had a son, who, had he been spared to me——" she

paused, for her emotion became as deep as my own ;—
“Through the long hours of many a weary night I have watched, and wept, and prayed for him. Long his place seemed vacant, his chair and plate unoccupied ; and when I carved for his sister, at our frugal little meals, a bitterness came over me, and I sighed, for there was no *other* to help ; but I am used to it now.”

“He must have been a sad dog, this son of yours, madam,” said Haystone, pinching my arm.

“Ah, sir ! do not say so. He went out on a dreadful night—the night of a political riot, when the troops fired on the friends of the people, and when many men were slain ; he disappeared and no trace of him could ever be discovered. Shall I tell you how hours and days, weeks and years rolled on, ere my sorrow became placid ? But my first-born—my little boy was too dear, though lost, to be forgotten ! his face, his eyes and voice, with a thousand little memories of him, were ever before me. People called him wild and wayward ; but to me he was ever gentle and mild as the tender lamb, to which the blessed God tempers the wind of Heaven. But I weary you, gentlemen, by all this ; I forget you cannot listen to it as my dear daughter Lotty does. While the young dream of the future, the old can only dream of the *past*.”

“Madam,” said Haystone, “such regrets as yours are most natural.”

“I had two sons, it would seem,” said my mother thoughtfully.

“Two ?” I reiterated, fearing that her mind wandered.

“It seemed so to me, one, a dear little boy, whom I loved in childhood, and who loved me well ; and *another*, who deserted me in manhood, for he who did so seemed so different from the curly-haired, waxen-skinned and bright-eyed little Oliver who slept in my bosom in infancy.”

These words wrung my soul, and even Haystone seemed

to think we were going quite far enough ; but the old lady resumed.

"It has been a fearful—a terrible feeling this to me. He was the star of my life ; the hope of my existence ; the sharer of my humble crust ; the joy and altar whereon were garnered up the hope and soul of a poor old widowed mother—but he left me ! If yet he lives, may God forgive him—yea, as I do ! . . . My dove went forth upon the waters ; but, alas ! he returned to me no more. The sunshine has seemed darker since I lost him ; but it may be that my sight is dimmer ; for as Ossian says, 'the years of age are dark and unlovely.'"

I felt ready to sink, for while saying all this, she had been gradually pushing the lamp nearer us across the table, and gazing wistfully and nervously at my face, for since I had spoken, *a mysterious chord* had been stirred in her heart, and some fond memory of my features came vaguely and strangely over her.

The tears ran down my face as she drew nearer.

At last suspicion became conviction.

"Mother !" I exclaimed. We simultaneously uttered a cry and she sank into my arms, while Lotty, now a tall and handsome girl—handsome as Georgette herself—rushed in to join us, and Rowland Haystone, of whose presence we were long quite oblivious, certainly had the satisfaction of producing all the dramatic effect he desired.

On this tableau, can I do better than drop the curtain, when we were all so happy ; and yet I have a word or two to add to the reader who has kindly followed me thus far by sea and land.

My mother was enchanted with Georgette, and so would *you* have been had you known her, for she proves to me all that the famous paragraph of Zimmerman expressed. Wealth flowed in upon us, for old M. de Thoisy, whom we left be-

hind in Guadaloupe for a little time, chartered a vessel and raised the treasure of *La Lima*, which amply repaid the speculation by realizing our most sanguine expectations ; and from that hour my old comrades of all ranks, drew on me as if I had been the Bank of England, or a species of regimental factor.

We had not been at home a week before I detected Haystone in the act of rhyming off to poor Lotty some of his usual love-speeches ; on which I borrowed a leaf from Père de Thoisy's book, and at once took him to task on the subject ; so the result was, that Lotty became Mrs. Rowland Haystone in three months after.

By this time the French had recaptured the whole of Guadaloupe, and heavily on my old comrades fell the slaughter of that day.

They defended Fort Matilda, our last stronghold there, till it was no longer tenable, so severely had it been injured by the enemy's fire ; thus the Earl of Kildonan and Colonel Grahame resolved to abandon it on the night of the 10th December. One company, under Lieutenant Paterson and *Ensign Drumbirrel*, occupied the ramparts on the right of the great breach ; Price, Colepepper, and Mackay, each at the head of their companies, fought bravely as they lined the bank of the Gallion river, when the whole garrison, with its stores and cannon, embarked on board the fleet of Admiral Jervis. By this time, the *three* companies which covered the retreat, were reduced to six sergeants and ninety-two rank and file !

I loved my regiment well ; to me it had been friends and kindred—home, a happy but movable home. We had shed our blood together ; slept on the same turf ; under the same tents ; endured the same hardships, and shared the same glories, dangers, and disasters ; for a “regiment is a permanent body, depending for its excellence on the general

fellowship of a permanent set of officers—on their general relations with the non-commissioned officers and men under their command—a high *esprit du corps*—and the preservation of old associations and recollections connected with its past history and achievements.”

We were a band of brothers, for there is among soldiers a deep fount of fraternity, of which the citizen knows nothing, and in which he cannot share. “My comrade—my brother soldier—my old brother officer!”—these, indeed, are endearing terms, and in the spirit they imbue we share our blanket in the bivouac, our last biscuit or ration bone, our last shot, and, too often, our last shilling, together!

Since the capture of Martinique and the loss of Guadeloupe, long years have changed, and war and pestilence have made sad havock in the ranks; death, distance, and time, have dug deep and fast their lonely graves on many a far and foreign shore—far from the land of the rock and the heather; but “while the kindling of life in my bosom remains,” I shall remember with pride and joy the friends that I made, the dangers that I dared, and the years that I spent in the old regiment of Scots Fusiliers.

THE END.

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